

Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden

Presidio of San Francisco, California



also known as

Fort Scott Organic Community Garden
Fort Scott Community Garden
Presidio Community Garden
Kobbe Community Garden
Presidio Community Victory Garden
World War II Victory Garden
Fort Scott Post Nursery 1912-1985

Barbara Corff & Mark Youngkin
San Francisco, California
August 2023

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Organic Community Garden
Presidio of San Francisco, California

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Cover photograph shows summer view of
Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden.

Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden

Presidio of San Francisco, California

Preface

The authors joined the community garden in 1999, invited by Jan Blum and Joanne Winship Chow, who were gardeners and members of the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB), where Mark was RAB Community Co-chair. The RAB collaborated with the Army and Presidio Trust to discover and clean up toxic waste, healing the land for a world-class National Park. Barbara was an Interpretive Docent with the National Park Service at the Presidio of San Francisco, developing tours of Tennessee Hollow Watershed.

Community gardening was a new adventure and an opportunity to learn side by side with more experienced gardeners. We loved seasonal workdays, picnics, sharing planting tips and discovering tasty ways to use our harvest. We consulted the “Golden Gate Gardening” book to learn about our unique climate zone just inland from the Pacific Ocean with its Marine Layer fog drip. Our efforts paid off, and our plants flourished. We proudly photographed our first zucchinis, strawberries, peas, and flowers that we nurtured. Mark engineered a drainage ditch and kept our soil renewed each year with fresh compost. I was drawn to this quiet, beautiful place where shy birds showed themselves along the fence line and the changing seasons brought a sense of delight and discovery. I spent hours photographing bugs, butterflies, buds and leaves, dew drops, and sunlight. The garden continues to invite a closer, longer look each year.

Members had a variety of reasons for gardening. Gardeners embraced permaculture, productive farming, artistry, family time, mycology, or pollinator gardens. Plots were at first tended by nearby residents and Presidio Trust Staff, with the San Francisco Waldorf School and the Mycological Society of San Francisco. The garden fulfilled a community desire to embody sustainability in the Presidio. Families wanted to teach their children about food and plants. The garden became an outreach and teaching tool for the Presidio Trust. AmeriCorps volunteers conducted bigger projects and built our raised planting beds.

The gardeners discovered historical features which led to explorations in the Park Archives and Records Center. In 2008, I co-wrote a Presidio-wide Garden Vision Plan which researched early Army gardens and suggested restoration and expansion opportunities. A result was new community plots in each Presidio neighborhood. I found relatives of the first commander of Fort Winfield Scott, John P. Wisser, while researching the name of the street leading to our garden, Wisser Court. Our quiet garden was gaining notice. We welcomed visitors from around the world who were always delighted to discover our ‘secret’ garden. Over the years, gardeners hid Easter eggs, grew pumpkins, picked blackberries, and celebrated birthdays in the garden. The garden became a favored place for Presidio Trust staff to enjoy an outdoor meeting and a place to remember two staff members who had passed away.

The garden beckons and challenges us. A visit to water our plots may turn into hours of dawdling and enjoying the balm and intrigue of the nearby forest filled with birds, hawks, and owls. There is always more to see and do in the garden. After my father passed away in 2005, just being in the garden was healing. I owe the garden my love for the happiness provided during the Covid pandemic. To be among thriving, growing life and to refocus on nurturing something outside of myself was just what I needed. It was an outdoor place to meet friends. We came to appreciate the hidden stories of our historic garden and felt a commitment to its care and future. We are healthier, friendlier and feel excited each time we plan the coming season’s plantings. We wrote this history so others will find a deeper connection to the garden and to ensure its continued benefit to visitors, residents, volunteers, and staff at the Presidio and beyond.

Barbara Corff

Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden
Presidio of San Francisco, California

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Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden

Presidio of San Francisco, California

Introduction

The Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden (Garden) is within the Presidio of San Francisco national park (Presidio). The Presidio was a military reservation from 1776 to 1994 that guarded the Golden Gate Strait entrance to San Francisco Bay harbor. The Ohlone Yelamu native people lived for thousands of years on this bountiful land between the Pacific Ocean, Golden Gate strait, and San Francisco Bay. The natural landscape was a rich mosaic of grassland hilltops, rocky serpentine and sandstone outcrops, oak-alder-willow forested ravines, and sand dune fields sprinkled with springs, ponds, creeks, and wetlands. Historical ecologists believe that prior to settlement, the Garden area was native sand dunes covered with a lush mantle of coastal scrub and grass, grazed on by tule elk and deer (Presidio Trust 2001). California grizzly bears caught salmon and steelhead in the coastal streams and feasted on whale carcasses washing ashore at Pacific Ocean beaches (Malcom Margolin, 1978).

In 1776, Lt. Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza and Jose Joaquin Moraga led a colonizing expedition north from New Spain to Alta California. The colonists founded a settlement at Mission San Francisco de Asís with military headquarters at nearby El Presidio Real de San Francisco. The garrison of 33 soldiers occupied an Ohlone Yelamu village called Petlenuc, the winter home to over 200 native people. The Mexican army occupied the Presidio garrison in 1821 and built nearby Yerba Buena pueblo that became the City of San Francisco. In 1846, the Presidio became a U.S. Army post with generations of soldiers passing through its gates to serve the nation around the world. In 1912, the Army created a new coastal artillery command post on the Presidio's western coastline called Fort Winfield Scott. In 1946, at the end of World War II, the Army decommissioned the obsolete Fort Winfield Scott. In 1962, the U.S. Congress preserved the Presidio as a National Historic Landmark. The Army closed the Presidio post in 1994, and the Presidio became part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). In 1998, Congress created the Presidio Trust to manage the interior 80%

of the Presidio including Fort Winfield Scott. The National Park Service (NPS) manages 20% of coastal park land (Sources: Presidio Trust 2001, Presidio Trust website at www.presidio.gov, National Park Service website at www.nps.gov/psf).



Location map of the Presidio of San Francisco national park. From 1776 to 1994, the Presidio of San Francisco was a U.S. Army post that guarded the Golden Gate Strait entrance to San Francisco Bay harbor. The park land of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area borders both sides of the Golden Gate Strait. The red star shows where the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden resides within the Presidio of San Francisco park.

The Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden (Garden) is in a secluded residential neighborhood with public access from Wisser Court. The Army's nickname for Fort Winfield Scott was Fort Scott and park staff call it Fort Scott Organic Community Garden. The Presidio became a national park in 1994 and in 1996, an informal group of volunteers, residents, and park staff resurrected a World War II victory garden within the abandoned Fort Scott Post Nursery into a new community garden. Now 27 years later, the Garden includes 48 raised planting beds, a Gardener's Shed, tool shed, office, greenhouse, parterre rose garden with fountain, herb garden, flower beds, heritage trees, a coast redwood grove, and a dawn redwood tree. Surrounding the Garden are historical residences, Presidio Forest, and a heritage fruit orchard. The Presidio Trust manages the Garden and supplies valuable resources including local Lobos Creek water, wood chip mulch, green waste compost, basic gardening tools, and services including trash disposal and maintenance. Over the years, the community gardeners have represented a diverse group of residents, park staff, volunteers, interns, park partners, and school children.



Welcome sign to Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden painted about 2005 under direction of Presidio Trust Garden Coordinator Jean Koch.

Adjoining the Garden on the north and east are the Kobbe Officer Quarters—single-family and duplex residences with detached auto garages, now rental housing managed by the John Stewart Company. Bordering the Garden on the southeast is open space at a former playground with the Hitchcock Street service road beyond. To the south is the Presidio Forest with thick stands of Monterey pine and cypress, blue gum eucalyptus, sycamore, and acacia trees. On the west, a newly planted heritage fruit orchard occupies the original 1912 Fort Scott Post Nursery site. Beyond the new orchard is Wright Loop, the driveway for the former commanding officer's residence, now a rental single-family residence.



Site vicinity map showing the neighborhood surrounding the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden and former Fort Scott Post Nursery. The Garden is situated within the Presidio of San Francisco national park and in the Fort Winfield Scott campus. Adjoining land use is residential and Presidio Forest. Public access to the community garden is from the Wisser Court driveway.

Fort Winfield Scott

To protect San Francisco Bay harbor from British and Russian invasion, New Spain built a fort in 1794 called the Castillo de San Joaquin or Punta del Castillo at the narrowest part of the bay's entrance within the Golden Gate Strait. The small adobe fort with 13 cannons sat on a high promontory above a white cliff called Punta del Cantil Blanco. After independence in 1821, Mexican forces occupied the fort. During 1835, Mexico moved its military headquarters from the Presidio to Sonoma, leaving the fort unoccupied. On July 1, 1846, Captain John Fremont, Kit Carson, and 10 American soldiers seized the fort during the Mexican American War calling it Castle Point or Fort Point in English. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers demolished the crumbling adobe fort in 1853 and blasted down the 90-foot-high cliff to just 15 feet above sea level. From 1853 to 1861, Army engineers built new Fort Point with seven-foot-thick brick walls and four casemated artillery tiers holding 200 smooth bore cannons. In 1882, the U.S. Army officially renamed Fort Point to Fort Winfield Scott in honor of General Winfield Scott, the national hero of the war against Mexico (Source: Fort Point National Historic Site, www.en.wikipedia.org).

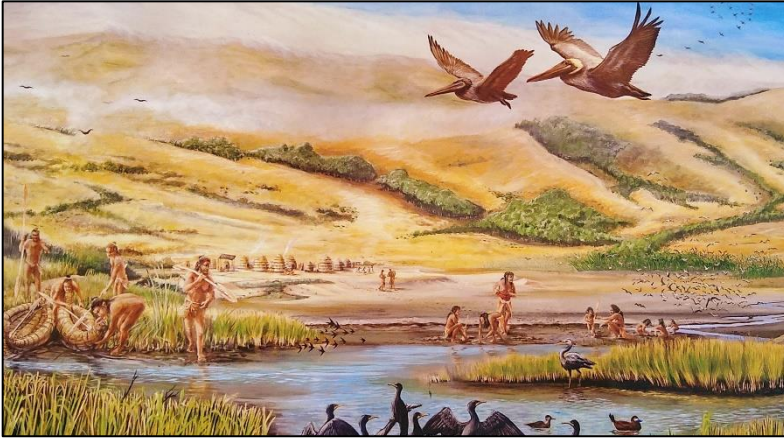
Winfield Scott (1786-1866) was the foremost American military hero between the Revolution and Civil War. He held the rank of General in three wars and under 14 presidents. The Army widely recognized him as the *Grand Old Man of the Army* for his years of service. The 22-year-old Scott, then a lawyer, became an Artillery Captain in 1808 and fought against Britain on the "Niagara Frontier" in the War of 1812. His victories made him a national hero and a general. His men called him *Old Fuss and Feathers* for his insistence on proper military discipline. In 1835, the Army asked him to supervise the removal of native people from the Cherokee Agency in Tennessee to reservations west of the Mississippi River. He did not command the tragic forced march now called the Trail of Tears.

General Winfield Scott was commanding general of the U.S. Army from 1841 to 1861. During the Mexican War of 1846-1848, General Scott and a small American force captured Vera Cruz during a seaborne invasion of Mexico. He led his men on a daring military campaign to capture Mexico City thereby ending the war. For outstanding service, the Army awarded him the brevet rank of lieutenant general in 1855, becoming the first man since George Washington to hold the rank. He was known for his fairness and concern for his subordinates and men (Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, www.britannica.com/biography/Winfield-Scott).

Winfield Scott lost the Whig Party's presidential nomination in 1852 due to his opposition to slavery. Winfield Scott was commander in chief of the U.S. Army when the Civil War started in 1861 and he retired due to ill health at 75 years old. Despite being a Virginia native, Scott stayed loyal to the Union and served as advisor to President Abraham Lincoln during the opening stages of the Civil War—before George McClennan assumed command. His contemporaries highly regarded his military talent, and historians consider him one of the most accomplished generals in U.S. history. Scott holds the record for the greatest length of active service as general in the U.S. Army, as well as the longest tenure as the Army's chief officer. The nation memorialized him with honorable degrees, statues, a postage stamp, and the names of counties, communities, military forts, lakes, a paddle steamer, military boat, societies, birds, and songs. Generations of men have his name. The nation preserved the General Winfield Scott House, his home in New York City, as a National Historic Landmark in 1975. A statue of General Winfield Scott stands at Scott Circle in Washington D.C. In 1912, the Army named the Presidio's new Fort Winfield Scott artillery command post in his honor. Source: Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winfield-Scott.



General Winfield Scott age 49
Source: 1835 portrait by George Catlin, U.S. Post Office, image in public domain.



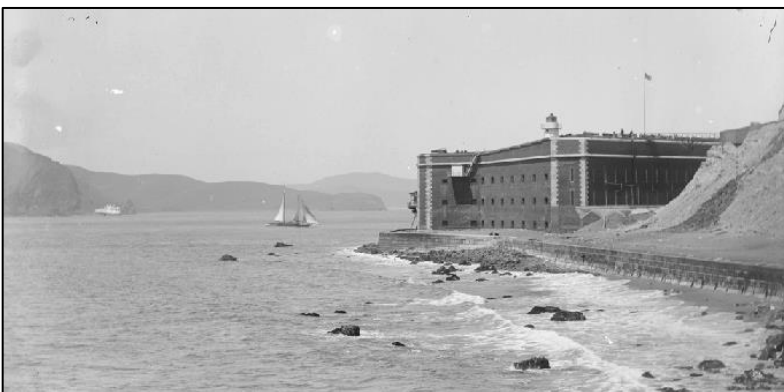
Recreation of pre-1776 Ohlone Yelamu native people's seasonal village called Petlenuc, on the present-day Presidio of San Francisco main parade ground. The U.S. Army will later build Fort Winfield Scott on the ridge top at the right side of this illustration. Image: drawing from public visitor kiosk at Presidio of San Francisco at site of former Petlenuc village, Presidio Trust 2022.



Drawing looking northwest in 1795 at adobe fort called Castillo de San Joaquin. New Spain soldiers built the fort in 1794 on top of the 90-foot-high promontory with a white cliff called Punta del Cantil Blanco. The fort guarded the Golden Gate Strait, the only entrance to the San Francisco Bay harbor. Image from book "The Beginnings of San Francisco" by Zoeth Skinner Eldredge, 1921, San Francisco, California, page 720.



Drawing of El Presidio Real de San Francisco garrison, also called the Royal Fortress of Saint Francis, about 1815. Image: drawing titled "Vue du Presidio de San Francisco", creator Louis Choris, Online Archive of California, UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library, California Cornerstones: Selected Images from the Bancroft Library Pictorial Collection.



Photograph looking northeast in 1882 of Fort Winfield Scott, originally called Fort Point when built by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers from 1853-1861. Image from website "Fort Point Before the Bridge: A Closer Look" by Arnold Woods at <https://opensfhistory.org/news/2019/09/>. Photograph "wnp71.0136" courtesy of a private collector.

The Presidio post grew into a sprawling 1,491-acre military reservation. A century of foraging and cattle grazing denuded the native vegetation from the sand dune fields. Starting on Arbor Day 1886 and continuing through 1903, the Army planted the 420-acre Presidio Forest of Monterey pine and cypress trees, and Tasmanian blue gum eucalyptus trees to stabilize the drifting sand dunes while sheltering and concealing the fort. A 1906 survey of existing conditions on the Presidio shows the future Garden site within the area of Presidio Forest (Hart 1906). In 1909, the Army began construction of a new coast artillery command post on the Presidio's western coastline. To make room for the new post, the Army cut down areas of the now mature Presidio Forest. As shown in the 1910 photograph below, construction is underway for the new Kobbe Officer Quarters residences with thick Presidio Forest beyond the new buildings. At a ceremony on June 19, 1912, the Army named the artillery command post Fort Winfield Scott. The post was the headquarters for the Artillery District of San Francisco which defended San Francisco Bay harbor from seaborne invasion. Also in 1912, the Army renamed the other Fort Winfield Scott, the 1853 brick fort on the Golden Gate Strait, as Fort Point once again (Thompson 1997).



Kobbe Avenue in 1910 with newly built Kobbe Officer Quarters residences and tennis court. Note the dense tree stand of Presidio Forest directly behind the residences which later became the site of the Post Nursery and future Garden. Source: image courtesy Barbara Corff and GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center.

In the 1910 photograph above, the new Kobbe Avenue Officer Quarters is in front of a dense forest. In 1912-1915, the Army cleared the forest for the new Post Nursery and Post Green House—the site of the present-day community garden. Similarly, in the photograph below, the view from the Fort Winfield Scott parade ground shows Kobbe Avenue in the far background with the dense stand of Presidio Forest beyond (U.S. Army 1910).



Undated Army photograph labeled "Troops performing a ceremony at Fort Winfield Scott." View looking south. Note the thick stand of Presidio Forest in photo background—now home to the community garden. Source: California Military Museum, image [nps.gov/prsf/learn/historyculture/fort-scott](https://www.nps.gov/prsf/learn/historyculture/fort-scott).

Credit: California Military Museum

Presidio Historic Gardens Project

In 2006, Presidio Trust Natural Resources project manager Damien Raffa engaged a team consisting of Carola Ashford, Barbara Corff and John Maeck, to create a comprehensive scope of work using historical research, interviews, and mapping. The resulting plan would outline vignettes of future garden opportunities throughout the Presidio of San Francisco. Carola, who passed away in 2009, shared her expertise as an Historic Landscape Architect. She had earlier worked on the restoration of the gardens at Alcatraz Island for the Park Service. At the time, Natural Resources personnel were discovering forgotten natural areas in the Presidio, and there was a desire to develop a deeper connection to 'place' for the growing number of residents. The goal of the work was to activate the otherwise quiet residential neighborhoods and create a human scale experience for visitors there.

The Presidio Historic Gardens Project, completed in 2008, gathered much of the historical information for this document. The following quote is the introduction to the 2008 Presidio Historic Gardens Project draft document (Source: Presidio Historic Gardens Project, 2008, draft document, personal collection of Barbara Corff):

Expanding upon existing volunteer, education, and visitor experiences in the Presidio, the Presidio Historic Gardens Project (PHG or “fig”) will offer enhanced community building opportunities by connecting urban neighbors with the Presidio through learning, restoration, and stewardship of varied cultural landscapes. A deeper relationship to past human values and culture are served through the study of and rehabilitation of historical cultivated landscapes. The natural resources site stewardship program has succeeded in attracting a dedicated core of volunteers who have made a real and lasting impact on the Presidio landscape. The PHG project will provide new opportunities in cultural landscape stewardship and will attract additional types of volunteers. Participants will experience recreation, contribution, community, and a deeper connection to our shared past, while actively pursuing their gardening interests. Potential audiences include garden enthusiasts, school groups, seniors, vacationers, and Presidio residents and tenants who will benefit from their accomplishments and discoveries while interacting with the multi-layered history of the Presidio. The project will look to the future as well, attracting participants to pioneer innovative sustainability programs and study. The Presidio Historic Gardens Project (PHG or “fig”) will populate the Presidio with lively programs and activity which will in turn create inviting, vibrant and beautiful places for all visitors to enjoy.

Thanks to the following people who provided valuable insights, input, and guidance on the development of this blueprint for a Presidio Historic Garden Program: Judy Miller, Arden Bucklin, Michael Lamb, Chandler McCoy, Christy Rocca, Leo Barker, Steve Haller, Randy Delahanty, Bob Carlsen, Michael Boland, and Terri Thomas.

In the following years, the Presidio Trust built new community garden plots in most Presidio neighborhoods, and gardening and composting programs expanded throughout the park. Barbara Corff continued the historical research on the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden during the writing of this document.



Presidio Historic Gardens Project Team at Fort Winfield Scott parade ground in 2006. Left to right: John Maeck, Barbara Corff, Carola Ashford, Damien Raffa. Image courtesy of Presidio Trust.

John Philip Wisser

The Army named the access road to the Post Nursery and Post Green House as “Wisser Court” to honor Brigadier General John Philip Wisser (1852-1927). John Wisser graduated from the US Military Academy in 1874, and the Army commissioned him into the Artillery. From 1883-1884, Wisser attended the Royal School of Mines in Freiberg, Germany, and observed French army maneuvers. He was military attaché in Berlin from 1906-1909. Colonel Wisser went on to command coastal artillery defense posts along the West Coast and the Presidio of San Francisco in 1911. On June 19, 1912, the Army assigned Colonel John P. Wisser as the first commanding officer of the new Fort Winfield Scott, recently constructed as the commanding post for the growing Artillery District of San Francisco to protect San Francisco Bay harbor.

In 1912, General Arthur Murray appointed two beautification boards to ornament the Presidio post and Fort Winfield Scott with flowers and plants “after the manner of Golden Gate Park.” The beautification work was for the upcoming 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition on the Presidio's San Francisco Bay shoreline (San Francisco Call 26 Sept. 1912). At Fort Winfield Scott, Colonel Wisser and a board of officers conducted beautification efforts with new flower beds and gardens, tree plantings, and “That a nursery be carefully maintained and replenished with fresh slips as plants are removed” (Thompson 1997, Thompson & Woodbridge 1992).



Colonel John Phillip Wisser, circa 1912, image from U.S. Library of Congress.



Photograph caption says "Moz in front of house" at garden on Fort Winfield Scott. Gardening became popular in San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and fire when a beautification movement strived to redecorate the city for the upcoming 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. Source: GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center, Lucinda Danielson collection 1897-1901, GOGA 17263.023. Image courtesy of Barbara Corff.

In 1912, Colonel John P. Wisser helped the Outdoor Arts League of California plant a "mantle of golden flowers" on the Golden Gate Strait above Fort Point as part of the "city beautiful movement." The clubwomen planted the hillsides of the Golden Gate Strait with a "golden sheen" to welcome visitors through the "floral Golden Gate." The clubwomen of Marin County planted a similar "saffron mantle" on the strait's opposite shore. In December 1912, Army soldiers under Major W.C. Davis prepared the flower beds below Batteries Marcus Miller and Boutelle. John McLaren, then Superintendent of Golden Gate Park, directed the clubwomen in planting yellow-colored flowers including California poppy, marigold, nasturtium, lupin, and Scotch broom. During the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, the "gateway truly golden" greeted ship passengers from distant ports to San Francisco Bay (San Francisco Examiner 1912).

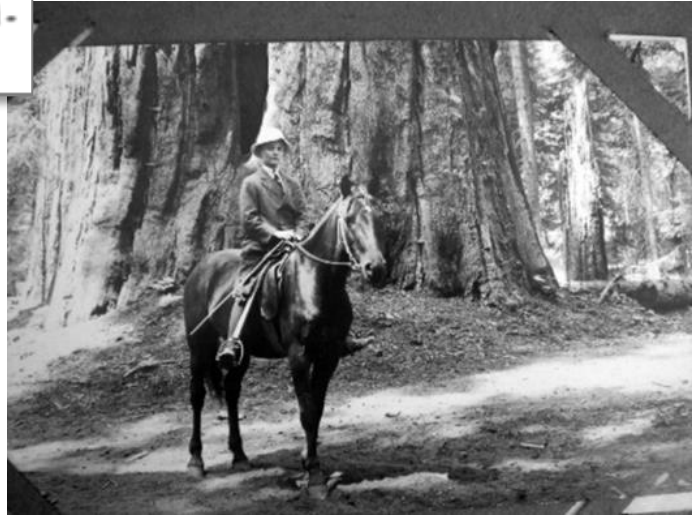
John Wisser and his family enjoyed summer vacations in Yosemite National Park. In 1912, the Wisser family spent a month in the redwood groves at the park, showing their affinity for nature. The Army may have planted the majestic Coast redwood grove in the late 1920s at the Garden in honor of John Wisser. The redwood grove reminds us of John Wisser's lasting influence on Fort Winfield Scott's appearance.

Mrs. John P. Wisser, who has been at the Yosemite with friends, is again at her home in the Presidio. Colonel Wisser and their son are distinguishing themselves by making a round-about walking tour of the Yosemite.

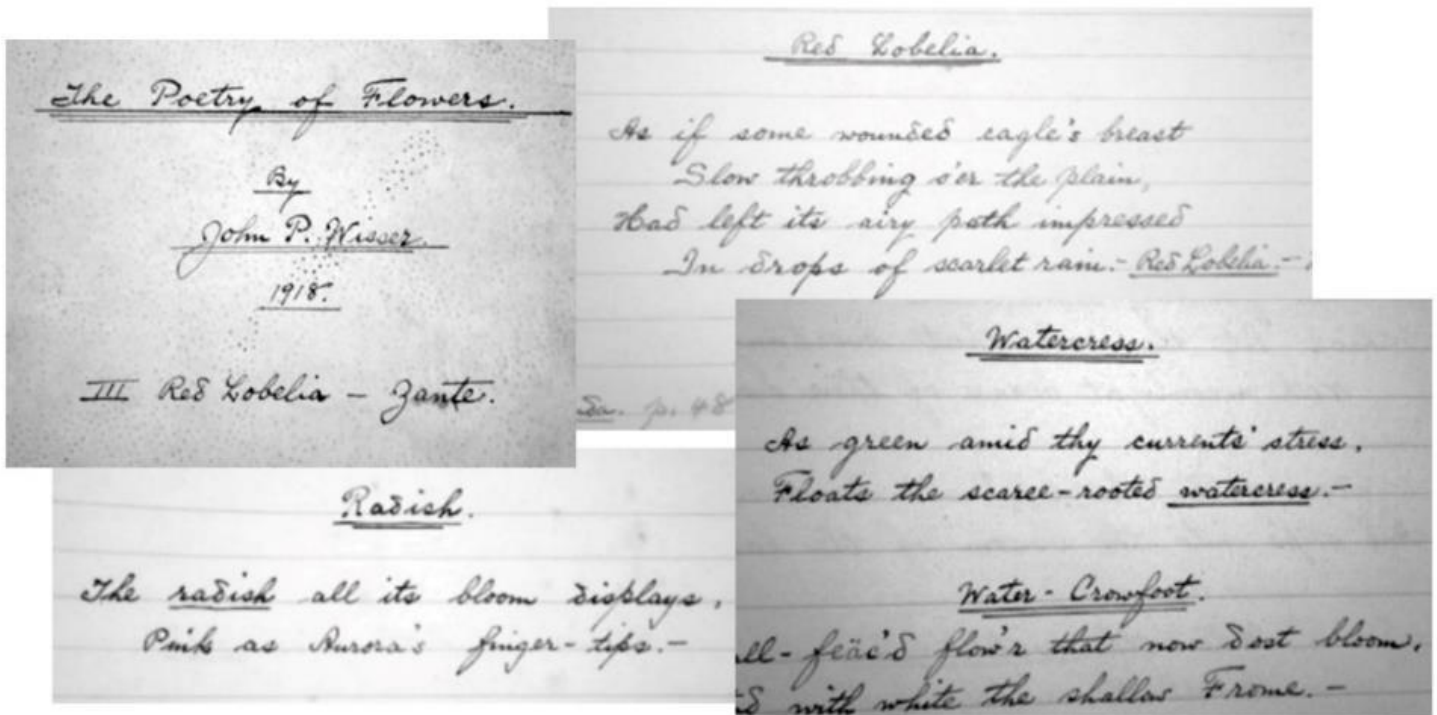
The Wisser family of nature enthusiasts spent vacation time in Yosemite National Park. Reference: San Francisco Examiner, 28 July 1912.

Photograph from circa 1912 showing one of John Wisser's sons on horseback in an ancient giant sequoia grove at Yosemite National Park.

Source: photograph in private collection of descendants of John P. Wisser, Image courtesy of Barbara Corff.



John Wisser's descendants inherited his travel trunk holding personal items including a handwritten book of "Flower Poetry." The collage below shows a selection of his poems. In a 2007 interview with Barbara Corff, great grandson Carl Wisser, an architect in Berkeley, described his great grandfather as the Presidio's self-appointed "landscape gardener with a keen interest in trees as well." He created plantings and tennis courts on the main post as well. John Wisser kept records of plants and taxonomic genus and gave scientific names to trees in California. Each summer, the late Carl Wisser celebrated his birthday in the Garden with his family and Barbara Corff.



Examples of handwritten poems from "The Poetry of Flowers" by John P. Wisser dated 1918. Source: collection of John P. Wisser descendants, images 2007 courtesy of Barbara Corff.

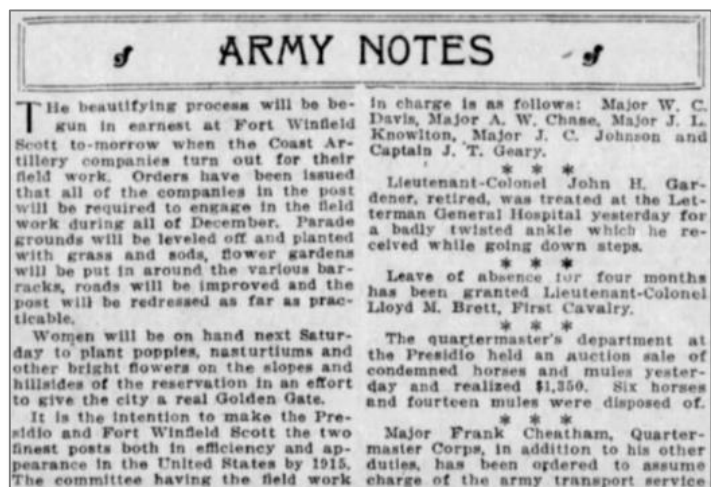
In 1912, Colonel Wisser entertained officer's families at his Presidio residence and "a quantity of flowers from the post gardens brightened every possible nook of their handsome home" (San Francisco Examiner 5 September 1912). In October 1912, Colonel Wisser "took up his residence at Fort Winfield Scott in a handsome new home" (San Francisco Call 29 October 1912). His family lived from 1911-1913 in the new 1910 commanding officer's residence at 12 Kobbe Avenue (now Building 1322), next to the new Post Nursery. The Army built a new commanding officer's residence in 1915 at 1337 Pope Street. However, there is no record of John Wisser living in the Pope Street residence (J. Bertland, Presidio Trust, personal communication, 10 March 2022).

In the summer of 1912, Colonel Wisser advocated for building a new Post Nursery to supply ornamental plants and flowers to beautify Fort Winfield Scott, and for growing ice plant to better conceal the new coastal batteries. Later in Fall 1912, Major William C. Davis followed Colonel Wisser's initiative and issued general orders to beautify the post. During 1912 and particularly in December, all companies and soldiers on Fort Winfield Scott worked to enhance the appearance of the post.

The service members paved the main post road along the Bay shoreline with asphalt. Soldiers painted the barracks and buildings with new paint and planted flower beds around them. The soldiers leveled the parade grounds, planted new grass and sod, improved roads and paths, and the post was "redressed as far as practicable."



Post card labeled "Commanding Officers Quarters" – address 12 Kobbe Avenue (now 1322 Kobbe Avenue) built circa 1910. Image courtesy of Presidio Trust.



An excerpt from a newspaper column called Army Notes states that "Flower Gardens will be put in around the various barracks." Reference: the San Francisco Examiner, 3 December 1912.

Army soldiers cut down the forested Post Nursery site in 1912 during post-wide beautification efforts. Soldiers removed trees in a clearing for the new nursery south of the Hitchcock Street service road adjoining the Kobbe Officers Quarters, and next to Colonel Wisser's residence. The accompanying 1912 Army map shows the proposed Post Nursery site selected for clearing. Two dashed outlines (highlighted in blue) show the two plots of land selected within Fort Winfield Scott to be prepared for nurseries and plant cultivation. The Army chose the Post Nursery site because it was forested land close to Colonel Wisser's residence with tall timber for constructing greenhouses, pole sheds, and fences. The site had convenient road access, a nearby water supply, and access to the new electrical power system. The Army completed major construction of Fort Winfield Scott by the end of 1912 (Thompson 1997, Thompson & Woodbridge 1992). In 1915, the Army expanded the Panama-Pacific International Exposition ornamental plant cultivation at the Post Nursery facility by clearing a larger area of Presidio Forest to the east and building the Post Green House, Building P-214, surrounded by large outdoor planting beds.



Closeup excerpt from 1912 map showing area cleared for Post Nursery as dashed outline with blue highlight. The map also shows a cleared area in Dragonfly Creek that later became the Presidio Nursery. Blue highlight by Barbara Corff and Damien Raffa in 2008. Red annotations by Mark Youngkin in 2022. Reference: U.S. Army, January 1912.

From 1912 to 1913, Colonel John P. Wisser was commander of the Pacific Coast Artillery District at Fort Winfield Scott. In 1913, the Army promoted Colonel Wisser to Brigadier-General commanding the 4th Brigade in Texas City, Texas. He moved his wife and son from his residence on Kobbe Avenue in September 1913 to an apartment in nearby Pacific Heights (Cullum's Register of Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy, Class of 1874, Vol. III, p. 225). A 1913 Santa Barbara newspaper article describes a military ceremony where the Army promoted Colonel John P. Wisser to Brigadier General:

The president's nomination of Colonel John P. Wisser, commanding officer of the Pacific Coast defenses, to a brigadier-generalship has met with the approval of every officer stationed in and about San Francisco, for local officers believe that no more efficient officer could have been nominated for the much-coveted rank.

In 1914, Brigadier General John P. Wisser was again commanding the Pacific Coast Artillery District at Fort Miley in San Francisco. From 1915 to 1918, he was the Commanding General of Army forces stationed in Hawaii (Santa Barbara Morning Press, 20 May 1913). John Phillip Wisser passed away on January 19-20, 1927, aged 74, in San Francisco. The San Francisco Chronicle newspaper published a brief one-paragraph obituary that presented no details on General Wisser's life. The funeral was at 2 PM at the Presidio Post Chapel with visitation at a local funeral home.

The U.S. Army buried John P. Wisser with honors on the grounds of the Presidio in the picturesque San Francisco National Cemetery with a view of the Golden Gate Strait. In 1939, the Army buried his wife Georgiana H. with John P. Wisser at his grave site. The grave is in the prestigious Officer's Circle (Section OS) in the 16th row from the north access road and 14th grave site from the east access road. The photograph on the following page shows the granite headstone in the Officer's Circle.



Brigadier General John P. Wisser
Image: U.S. Army Pacific website.

The Army at Fort Winfield Scott first started naming streets after deceased artillery officers beginning in 1924. Sometime after the burial of John P. Wisser on the Presidio in 1927, the Army named Wisser Court at the entrance to the Fort Scott Post Nursery in his memory. In the late 1920s, the Army also planted three coastal redwood trees in a grove at the Post Nursery near the Commanding Officer Quarters, where Colonel John P. Wisser lived from 1912-1913.

In an interview with Barbara Corff in 2007, the General's grandson, the late Carl Wisser said that the Garden is a special place to the Wisser family. The authors believe it would be fitting to name the coast redwood grove as the Wisser Redwood Grove, in honor of General Wisser's keen interest in nature.



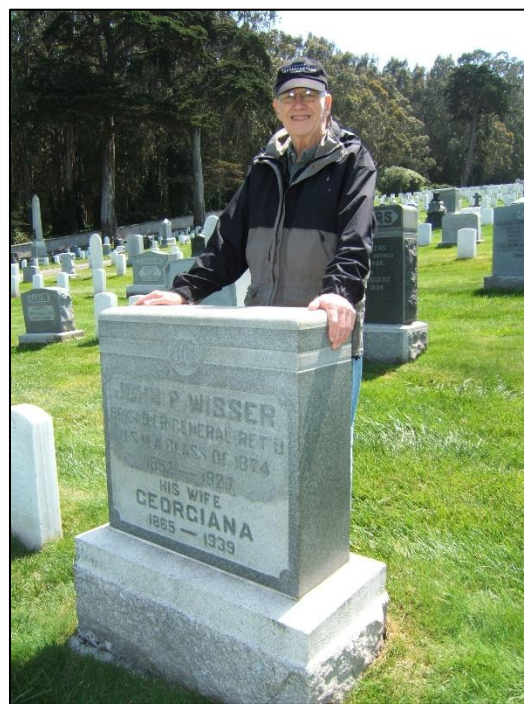
Street sign for Wisser Court, the entrance road to the former Post Nursery and Post Green House, named for commanding officer John P. Wisser.



Grandson Carl Wisser, family, and descendants of Brigadier General John P. Wisser celebrating Carl's 77th birthday at the fountain pool in the parterre rose garden in June 2007. Image 2007 courtesy of Barbara Corff.



Closeup view of granite headstone for Brigadier General John Philip Wisser, and his wife Georgiana in the San Francisco National Cemetery. Image 2022 by Mark Youngkin.



Grandson Carl Wisser at gravestone of Grandfather John Philip Wisser in the San Francisco National Cemetery. Image 2007 by Barbara Corff.

Post Nursery & Victory Garden

U.S. Army posts have traditionally cultivated vegetable gardens to supplement soldier's rations. An 1851 newspaper article titled "The New Army Orders" explains the tradition (Daily Alta California, April 17, 1851):

It has always been customary at military garrisons and posts to cultivate in a small way, sufficient to supply the post with such vegetables as are not generally allowed by regulations, the labor being performed in such a way as not to interfere with the performance of the regular routine of garrison duty.

The Presidio main post had its gardens, and the new Fort Winfield Scott needed its own vegetable garden. By 1915, the Army had expanded the Post Nursery with a new Post Green House and a large area of planting beds that included a post vegetable garden. In 1917, the National War Garden Commission urged citizens to cultivate idle land to increase food production so the nation could send more food to allies fighting overseas in World War I. On April 6, 1917, the United States entered the Great War. In 1918, the Army instructed all posts to cultivate war gardens as part of a food gardens for defense campaign to grow surplus food. The new garden at Fort Winfield Scott's Post Nursery coincided with the Army's nationwide war garden program.

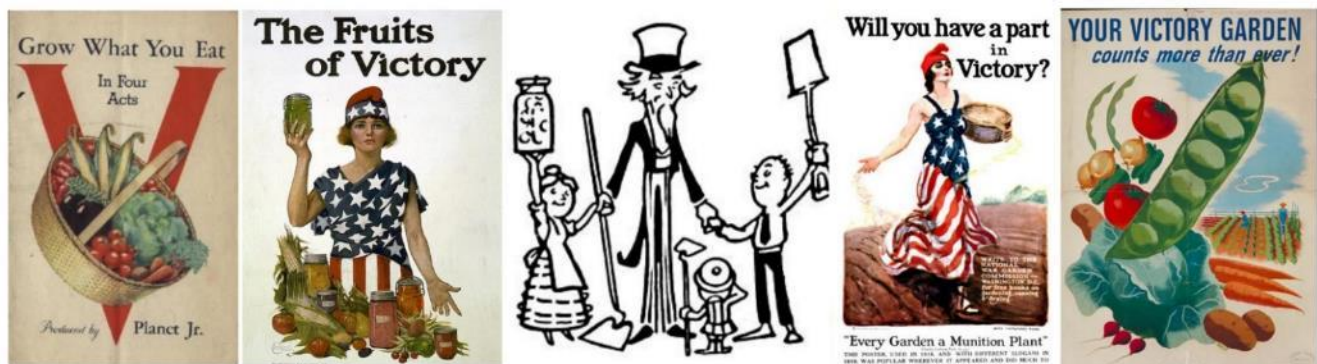
A victory garden, also known as war garden, liberty garden, or food garden for defense, is a vegetable plot at a post, residence, vacant lot, or park that citizens (and soldiers) cultivate to increase food production in war time (source: Wikipedia.org). San Francisco Mayor James Rolph Jr. declared April 1st (to fool the Kaiser) in 1918 to be San Francisco's "Victory Garden Day" to coincide with the national War Garden Week and War Garden Day. The nation and mayor used the slogan "Rally Round the Spade" (San Francisco Call 16 March 1918; history.com):

The mayor voiced his approval in a public proclamation to the men, women, and children of San Francisco, calling upon them to observe "Victory Garden Day" in the patriotic spirit in which it has been esteemed. He has asked that every person not otherwise engaged devote himself to converting a back yard or a vacant lot—into a war garden to grow vegetables as a help in winning the war.

San Francisco celebrated the day with a parade and patriotic demonstration down Market Street by soldiers, boy scouts, and school children that ended at a patriotic ceremony and food fair at Civic Center (Lawson 2005):

Soldiers, sailors, and Marines marched up Market Street to the Civic Center, accompanied by floats displaying the products of backyard vegetable gardens. Twenty young women performed a "dance of war gardens and victory" in front of City Hall. War Garden Day was only a small part of a huge national effort. In 1917 and 1918, more than 5 million gardens were planted...

The nationwide Victory Garden campaign was about more than just growing food for the allies overseas.



Examples of victory garden and war garden posters published from World War I to World War II in American magazines. Source: public domain from Google search engine and Wikipedia.com.

The accompanying newspaper article from 1919 explains the other goals of the nationwide Victory Garden campaign. The article describes the partnership between the National War Garden Commission and the Young Men's Christian Association in starting Victory Gardens to instill the values of Americanism, patriotism, thrift, a strident work ethic without idleness, and to promote capitalism over socialism. The Army and National War Garden Commission considered the threat of socialism posed by the Russian Revolution in 1917 as a grave concern at home. In their view, industrious civilian gardeners would not have time to organize a socialist movement. As told in the article "The best antidote for Bolshevik doctrine is the production of food for the kitchen door."

We now remember victory gardens from their popularity in the second world war during the 1940s. An Army newspaper called the Golden Gate Guardian (1941-1946) covered stories in the Harbor Defenses of San Francisco (HDSF) district from its headquarters at Fort Winfield Scott. During the 1940s, the newspaper published accounts of former farmers, now enlisted soldiers, growing their own "Victory Garden" next to their barracks.

The following article from 1943 titled "QM Victory Garden Gets Under Way" is an example (source: California Digital Newspapers Collection, Golden Gate Guardian, Vol. III, No. 8, Page 7, 25 April 1943):

Probably the only Victory Garden maintained by an enlisted man in the HDSF is babied along by Sgt. Alvin Macedo, Scott QM. Al spent last week digging and clearing space near his barracks, then planted carrot, beet, turnip, rhubarb, chard, broccoli, and pea seeds. He spends about an hour each evening with a spade and water hose. "My biggest problem to date is worms," Macedo asserts. "There are many cutworms around, but I am certain a mixture of bluestone and lime will keep them away. The Chemical Warfare boys are helping me out on that score in their spare time." He plans to give the vegetables to the QM mess sergeant in a couple of months and the boys will have greens for nix. Al was a produce farmer before entering the Army over a year ago from Madera, Calif.

In articles mostly on sports and entertainment, the Golden Gate Guardian and other Presidio newspapers ignored the Fort Scott Post Nursery and its garden. There is no surviving account of past Army gardening practices at the former Post Nursery and garden. By the end of World War II in 1946, Fort Winfield Scott's post garden was one of 70,000 Victory Gardens planted in San Francisco neighborhoods (Brucato 2008).

After the end of WW II, the era of Victory Gardens declined. The later Korean and Vietnam wars did not see food shortages at home and the nation never used its war garden program again. In the 1990s, a national revival of organic vegetable gardening stimulated a recognition of the forgotten victory gardens. Communities across America replanted former victory gardens as community gardens. Since the early 1990s, San Francisco residents have called the community garden at Fort Winfield Scott as the World War II Victory Garden or Presidio Community Victory Garden.

Victory Garden Campaign Plan Proposed to Offset Doctrines Advanced by Bolshevik Creed

WASHINGTON, March 14.—Americanism illustrated in growing victory gardens is "the best antidote for Bolshevik doctrine," according to the Young Men's Christian association, which is planning a 1919 campaign of "Americanism and the speaking of English language via the victory garden." Details of the campaign were completed here today by the national war garden commission, co-operating with the immigration department of the Young Men's Christian association in Chicago. Plans also provide for the showing of the victory garden work in moving pictures throughout the country.

To start off the campaign 16,000 garden and canning books have been sent to Chicago in addition to several thousand posters. The Young Men's Christian association had 150 acres of industrial gardens last year and they hope to better that record this year. These gardens are 25 by 510 feet.

"This is one of the most constructive campaigns yet undertaken," said Charles Lathrop Pack, president of the national war garden commission today. "Do not forget that the garden produces something besides food. It produces thrift, so important to the nation at this time. Then, too, it means contented workers everywhere. The man with a victory garden realizes the value of

a home and he knows the value of making regular trips to the bank. Then, too, the incentive to get out in the open and speak the English language is of tremendous value.

"The banks of the country know the home food producer for a good customer and a good citizen. The time to begin making that citizenship is when the citizen is new. The best antidote for Bolshevik doctrine is the production of food for the kitchen door."

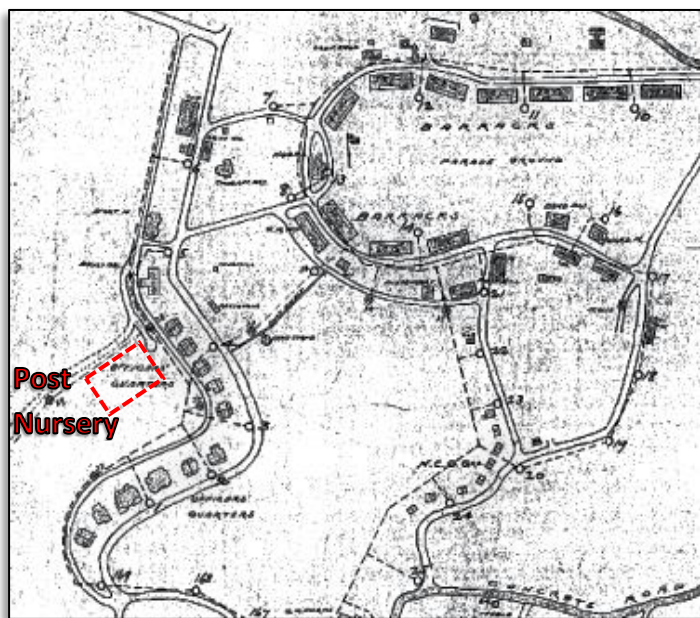
P. S. Riedale, secretary of the national war garden commission, has just returned from Europe, where he spent three months studying the home food production plans. He points out that everything possible must be done in the United States to produce food close to the point of consumption in order that other food stuffs that can be shipped long distances can be sent abroad. There are millions in Europe close to the point of starvation, according to reports from abroad.

Siberia, too, is to learn all about victory gardening. Prof. W. C. O'Kane of the State Agricultural college at Durham, N. H., has prepared a garden circular for distribution this summer in Siberia by the agricultural educational expedition under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian association. Pictures from the national war garden commission victory garden book are used in the book, which has been translated into Russian.

Newspaper article from 1919 discussing the political aspects of the Victory Garden Campaign. Source: newspaper article in San Diego Union and Daily Bee, 17 March 1919, California Digital Newspaper Collection

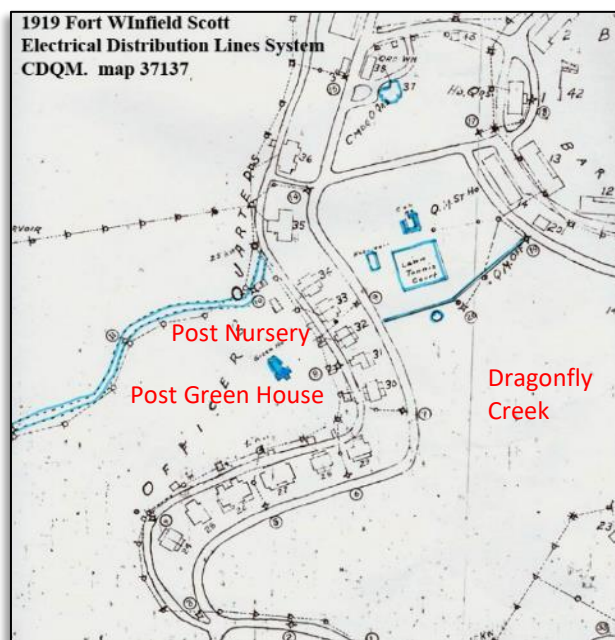
Discerning the history of the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden involved research into historical Army maps, plans, and documents at the GGNRA's Park Archives & Records Center on the Presidio. Barbara Corff gathered the information in this document about Army post gardens during the Presidio Historic Gardens Project. Earlier assessments by the Park Service and Presidio Trust supplied research information from historical sources: 1) the April 1992 National Park Service (NPS) planning document titled Presidio Cultural Landscape Analysis, and 2) the March 2008 Presidio Trust planning document titled Fort Scott Cultural Landscape Assessment. The U.S. Army place name for the artillery command post was Fort Winfield Scott, after the famous general. The abbreviation Fort Scott was a common Army nickname for the post. Today, the Presidio Trust uses the nickname Fort Scott for the historic post campus and planning district.

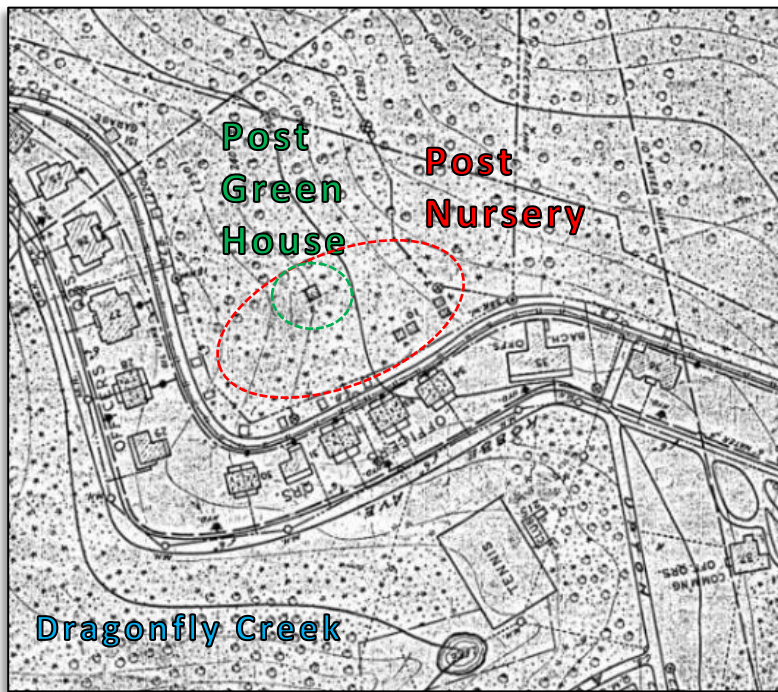
Inspection of maps and plans available in the Park Archives and Records Center and as discussed in the 1992 and 2008 cultural landscape analysis documents, reveals cultural features beginning circa 1917 that show the new 1912 Post Nursery and 1915 Post Green House. The *Lighting System* plan dated 1917, shown below, depicts a cul-de-sac (future Wisser Court) at the entrance to the 1912 Post Nursery with electrical power poles along the Hitchcock Street service road behind the Kobbe Officer Quarters. Fort Winfield Scott's *Lighting System* maps dated 1919 and 1920, along with a base facility map dated sometime in the 1920s (shown on next page), show the future Wisser Court next to four older Post Nursery structures labeled as building 10. Also shown on the maps are new electric power distribution lines and the new Post Green House building P-214 built in 1915 (U.S. Army 1917, 1919, 1920s). A 1922 post map (not included) shows that "a small rectangular area had been cleared of trees and fenced" for the new Post Nursery.



Left: Closeup excerpt from 1917 Lighting System map showing the beginning of Wisser Court at the unlabeled Post Nursery. Annotation by Mark Youngkin in 2022 shows the original 1912 Post Nursery location. North direction is towards right side of map. Reference: Presidio Trust 2008.

Right: Closeup excerpt from 1919 Lighting System map showing new Post Green House building (in blue highlight) labeled "Green House." Blue highlight shows the former electrical distribution service road alongside the unlabeled Post Nursery buildings. North direction is towards right side of map. Blue highlights by Barbara Corff and Damien Raffa in 2008. Red annotations by Mark Youngkin in 2022. Reference: U.S. Army 1919.



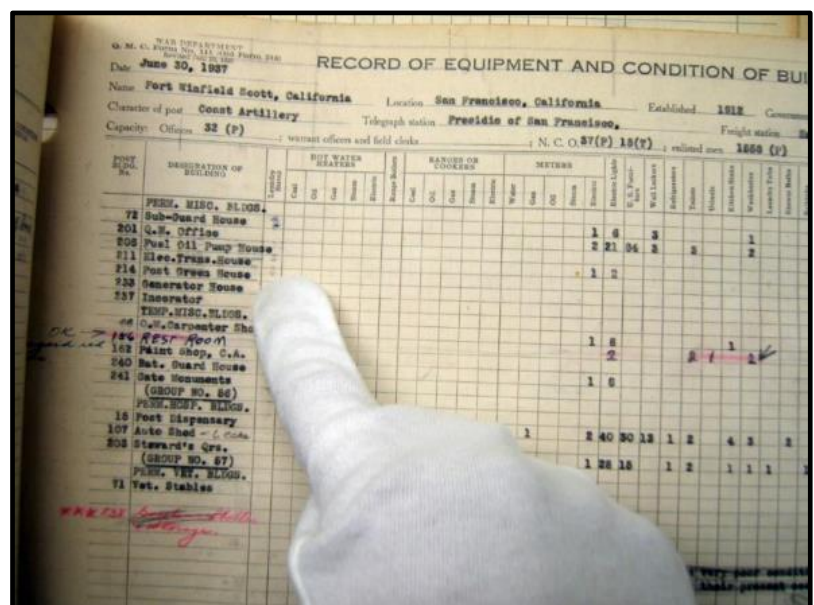


Closeup excerpt from 1920s Fort Winfield Scott map showing Post Nursery site as four small square structures labeled as Bldg. 10 and 1915 Post Green House building as small square structure with no label. North direction is towards bottom of map. Annotations by Mark Youngkin in 2022. Reference: U.S. Army 1920s.

The Army expanded the Post Nursery eastward in 1915, beyond the original 1912 nursery, with the addition of the new Post Green House and newly cleared areas for added planting beds. The Army needed the nursery expansion to cultivate plants and flowers to beautify the post and support flower gardens during the February 20 to December 4, 1915, Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE).

The Army at Fort Winfield Scott kept track of its buildings in post Quartermaster Building Books. The book dated June 30, 1937, lists the structure called the "Post Green House" building P-214. An accompanying Record of Equipment and Condition of Buildings described the Post Green House in good condition with 1,576½ square feet, a wood and concrete foundation, wood and glass walls, a glass and composition roof, and a dirt and concrete floor. The main building was 47' 8" by 18' 6" with wings 38' by 17' 9". The building cost \$700 to construct in 1915. The building had a water connection and electric lighting. A coal stove heated the greenhouse. The building's original 1915 greenhouse floor plan lasted from construction in 1915 until remodeling in 1938.

Fort Winfield Scott's Quartermaster Building Book dated 30 June 1937 with "Post Green House" building listed as building P-214 constructed in 1915. Image courtesy of Barbara Corff. Reference: U.S. Army, 30 June 1937.



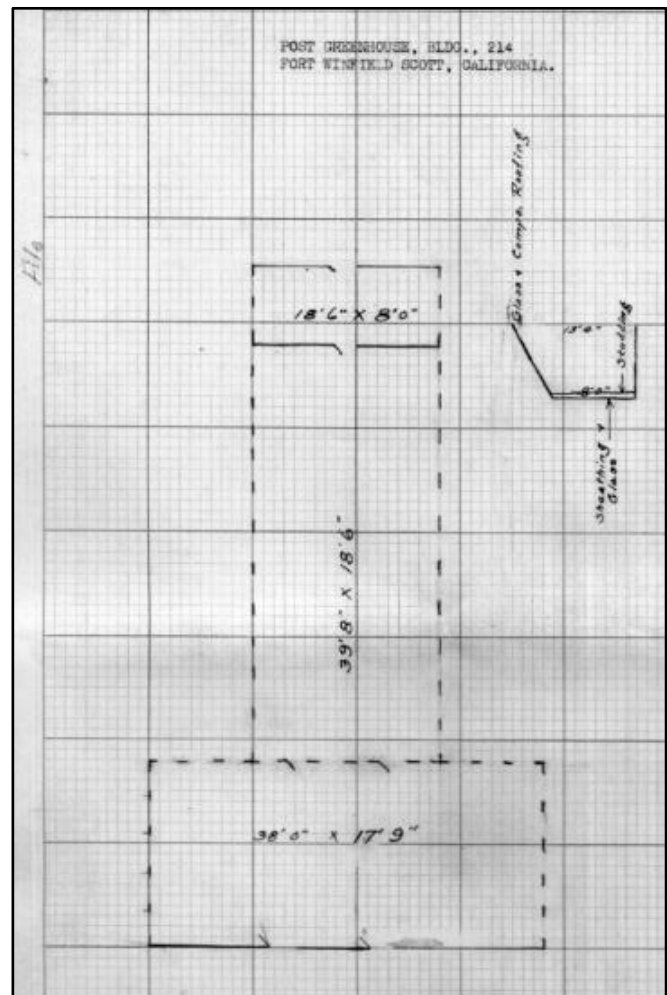


View west of Fort Winfield Scott's Post Nursery with Post Green House building P-214 / T-1327 in photo dated June 30, 1932. Presidio Forest in background along present-day Wright Loop. Access road in foreground connected to Hitchcock Street service road. Image: GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center (PARC), Post Engineers Office Historical Records, GOGA 39814, Box 11 Folder 14.

The earliest known photograph above shows the 1915 Post Green House as it appeared on June 30, 1932. Between 1933 and 1938, the Army and Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), which had a training camp on the Presidio, rehabilitated the 1915 greenhouse with substantial modifications and upgrades using funds supplied by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The rehabilitation team removed the building wings and two add-on sheds while adding new glass walls and large ventilation louvers in the glass roof.

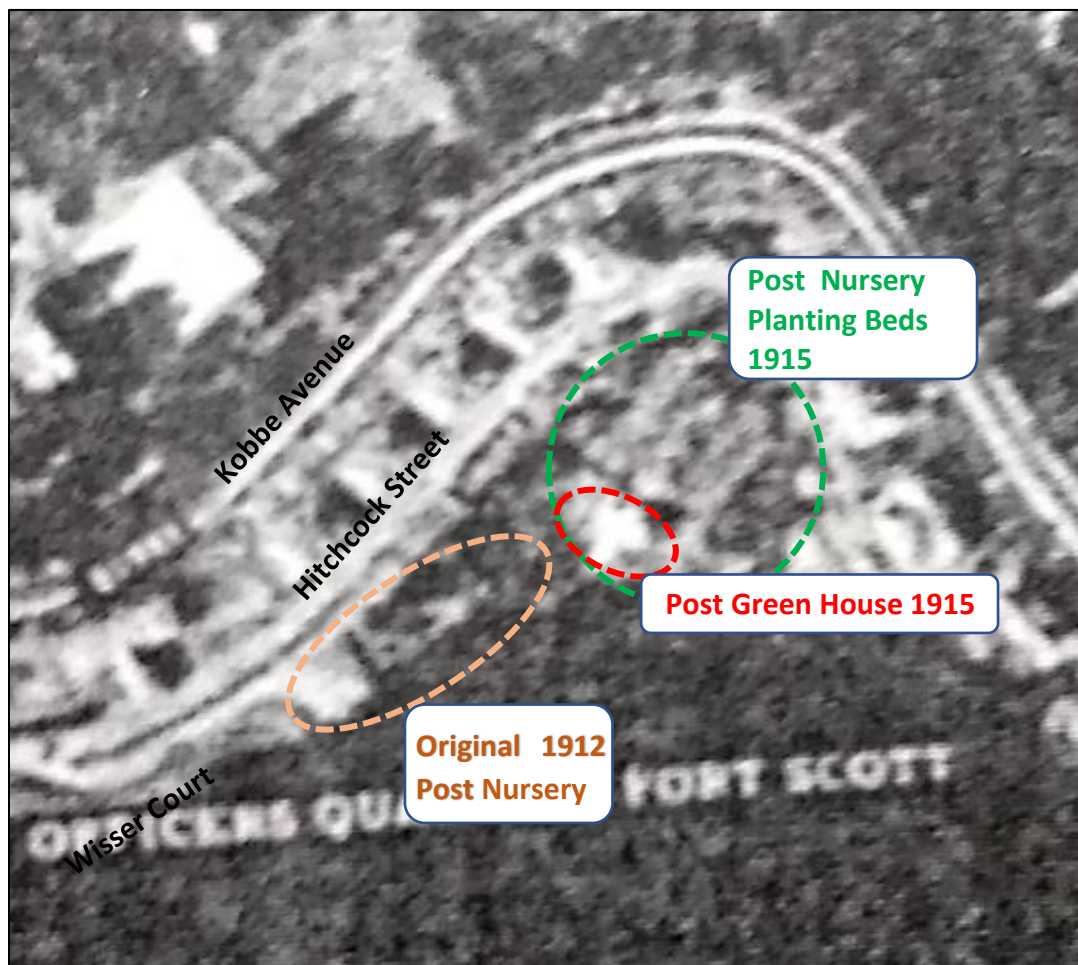
A major improvement was the addition of a gas-fired boiler for steam heating to replace the 1912 coal fired furnace (GGNRA Park Archive & Records Center, Collection Name Old Fort Scott Building Book, Collection Number: GOGA 32422). The Army used the rehabilitated Post Green House from 1938 through 1959. In 1959, the Army replaced the original greenhouse with a larger new wood and fiberglass greenhouse structure in a new location closer to road access at Wisser Court.

Plan of 1915 Post Green House - building P-214 with original T-shaped greenhouse design with building wings and shed. Source: GGNRA Park Archive & Records Center (PARC), courtesy of Amanda Williford, PARC Curator & Reference Archivist.



The earliest image of the 1912 Post Nursery and 1915 Post Green House is an aerial photograph mosaic map dated 1927, created by the Crissy Field Air Corps, as shown below. As one of the earliest aerial photographs, the composite photograph has poor resolution. The 1927 aerial photograph shows the older 1912 Post Nursery buildings (orange circle) to the southwest of the 1915 Post Green House building (red circle) with expanded Post Nursery planting beds to the east (green circle). The photograph shows the 1915 Post Green House building 214 as a bright white structure, painted with whitewash. To the northeast of the greenhouse is a large, cleared area (within green circle) presumed to be large planting beds.

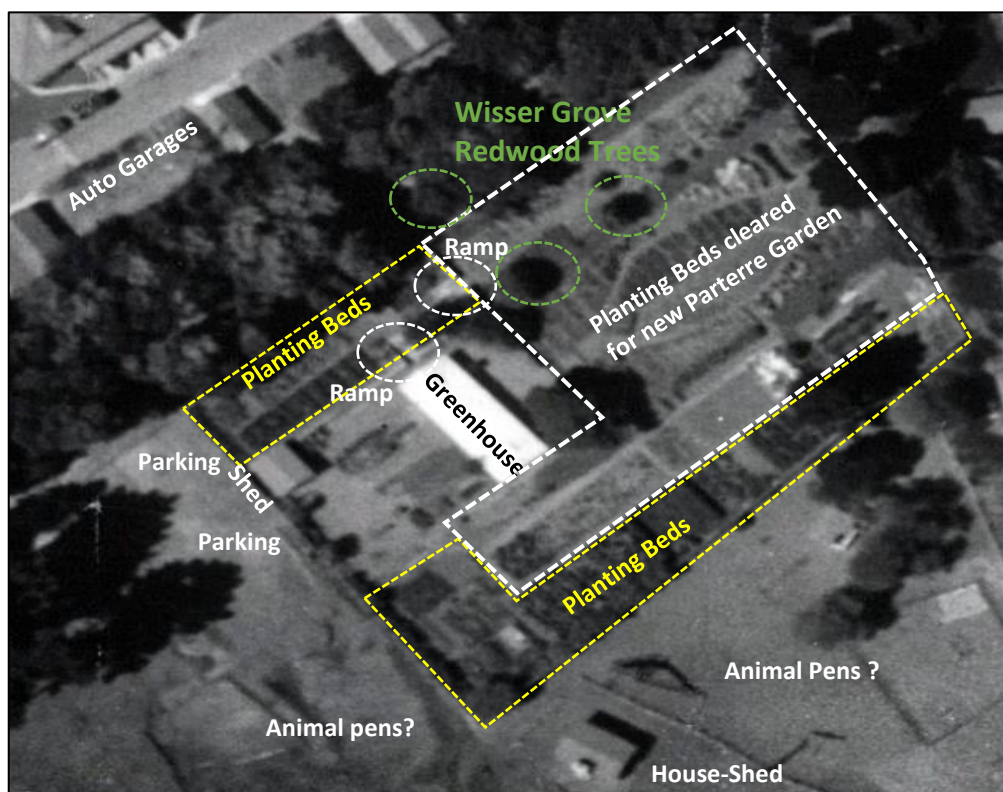
The Army appears to have planted the three coast redwoods as a small redwood grove in the late 1920s. In the 1927 aerial photograph shown below, the three coast redwood trees may have been small tree saplings too small to be visible on the aerial photograph with poor resolution or the Army has not yet planted the trees.



Closeup excerpt from Aerial Photographic Mosaic Map of Presidio of San Francisco. Photographed and Assembled by 15th Photo Section, Air Corps, Crissy Field, Presidio of San Francisco, on September 7, 1927. Original photo mosaic at GGNRA Park Archives & Record Center, photograph collection in "Aerials" folder, Amanda Williford, Curator and Reference Archivist. North to photo top. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022.

The Army's *Map of the Fort Winfield Scott Military Reservation* dated 1938 (not included) shows three structures at the Post Green House, including the greenhouse, a shed, and outbuilding. The August 1938 aerial photograph shown on the next page has excellent resolution and clearly shows structures and planting beds. The Army expanded the 1912 Post Nursery facility eastward with the addition of the 1915 Post Green House building labeled as P-214 / T-1327, a large tool shed, and a large area of active planting beds.

The accompanying August 1938 aerial photograph shows the expanded Fort Scott Post Nursery with terraced planting beds surrounding the white Post Green House built in 1915. From 1915 through the 1930s, the Army cultivated the area surrounding the Post Green House with nursery and garden planting beds. The Army-WPA-CCC rehabilitated the Post Green House from 1933-1938. Visible in the 1938 aerial photograph are masonry walls and two stone wheelbarrow ramps (white circles) constructed by the Army-WPA-CCC circa 1933-1938 for access to the upper planting-bed terrace. The Army planted three coast redwood trees in a grove around 1927, as shown by the green circles labeled as Wisser Grove coast redwood trees.



Closeup excerpt from August 1938 aerial photograph showing Fort Scott Post Nursery surrounding the white 1915 Post Green House refurbished by the Army-WPA-CCC in 1938. North to photo top. Annotations by Mark T. Youngkin 2022. Source: San Francisco Public Library, David Rumsey Map Collection, San Francisco Aerial Photographs 1938, number 115. San Francisco Aerial Views, August 1938.

By 1928, agricultural activities appear to have moved eastward to the expanded Post Nursery surrounding the 1915 Post Green House. The 1938 aerial photograph shows animal husbandry pens adjoining the south and west Post Nursery fence line. The Post Nursery site is on a hillside sloping eastward with more than eight (8) feet of elevation drop. To create level planting beds for the Post Nursery, the Army graded a series of hillside terraces descending in elevation from west to east. A perimeter fence is visible in the 1938 aerial photograph surrounding the Post Green House and Post Nursery. Vehicle access to the facility was from two parking lots. Residents in the Kobbe Officer Quarters could access the garden from stairways on the Hitchcock Street service road and gates in the surrounding fence.

The June 30, 1940, *Record of Equipment and Condition of Buildings* describes Greenhouse building 214 with 1557 square feet and in excellent condition (following WPA rehabilitation in 1933-1938). Building 82, a Tool Shed had 391 square feet and was in good condition. As annotated on the August 1938 aerial photograph above, a large area of the Post Nursery planting beds looks untended and appear to be undergoing clearing for a new parterre rose garden constructed by the Army-WPA-CCC in 1938-1939.

Coast Redwood Grove

The planting of memorial redwood trees and groves is a long-standing tradition in California and the Presidio continues the tradition in modern times. In a 2006 ceremony, the Presidio Trust and community planted the Wayburn Redwood Grove in the restored riparian habitat at Thompson Reach. The grove commemorated the 100th birthday of beloved park advocate Dr. Edgar Wayburn, and his wife Peggy. Ed Wayburn was known for his tireless advocacy, and he said "Never give up. Even if you do not win in your lifetime, you can blaze a trail for others to follow." (Source: Presidio Trust website at www.presidio.gov/places/Wayburn-redwood-grove).

Shown in the accompanying recent photographs are the three (3) coast redwood trees that the Army planted at the Fort Scott Post Nursery. There is no known documentation on who donated the trees or why the Army planted the redwood grove. The Army planted the grove on the upper planting bed terrace at the northern boundary of the former Post Nursery. The three coast redwood trees are similar, each tree estimated at 90 feet tall with a triple-fused trunk about 20-foot in girth at chest height. The size suggests the three coast redwood trees are about 90+ years old and the Army could have planted the redwood grove in the late 1920s. Planting a coastal redwood tree was a significant event during the 1920s in California—usually at a public ceremony to commemorate a special person. Unusually, the Army planted this redwood grove with no marker in the secluded Post Nursery, which in the 1920s was inside a barbed-wire security fence with no public access.

Historical aerial photographs dated 1938, 1957, 1969, 1989, 1993 show the three existing coast redwood trees (*Sequoia sempervirens*) at the northern margin of the lower parterre rose garden planted together in a small redwood grove. Based on the tree shadow in the 1939 oblique aerial photograph (shown on page 22), the height in 1939 of the three trees is about 20 feet (compared to a nearby 2-story building). In good conditions, redwood can grow up to two feet a year. In the 1939 aerial photograph, the young redwood trees may be around ten years old, and the Army could have planted the trees in the late 1920s.



Barbara Corff in front of triple-fused trunk of coast redwood tree with 20-foot girth, typical of all three coast redwood trees in Wisser Grove at the community garden.

View north from community garden of three 90-foot-tall coast redwood trees planted by U.S. Army in the 1920s within the former Fort Scott Post Nursery.

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) has a long history of dedicating coast redwood in California. For example, the Covina DAR Chapter reported in an April 1927 national newsletter that the Conservation Committee during the year had planted 1,670 trees (type unspecified). At a DAR conference in 1929, the California State Society planted a coast redwood tree on the new campus of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). The President General planted the tree for the Hollywood Chapter in honor of George Washington. "This was the first of an imposing avenue of trees to be donated by California D.A.R. chapters in honor of the Presidents of the United States and is to be known as Presidents Row." "This ceremony, so in keeping with the aims of the Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, to perpetuate and honor the ideals and traditions of the founders of our glorious Country, brought the conference to a close." (Source DAR online newsletter archive, March 1929, page 153).

Between 1921 and the 1950s, partnerships between Save the Redwoods League, Garden Club of America, National Geographic Society, and Daughters of the American Revolution, saved the most important surviving old growth coast redwood groves in California. In 1931, Save the Redwoods League and Garden Club of America forged a working partnership to protect the Garden Club of America Grove in the Humboldt Redwoods State Park (dedicated in 1934), saving seventeen old growth coast redwood groves. "The link between the societies was their respective efforts, perhaps little known, to help preserve one of America's oldest living heritages—the magnificent redwoods in California." (Source: DAR newsletter archive, October 1965, page 773, A Friendship of Service).

Starting in 1945, the Save the Redwood League, Garden Club of America, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, and State of California raised money to create the National Tribute Grove, the largest World War II memorial in the United States honoring the 16.1 million World War II service members in America's Armed Forces. Dedicated on September 25, 1949, the National Tribute Grove saved 500-acres of old growth redwood forest (later expanded to 5,000 acres) at Jedediah Smith State Park in Crescent City, California.

Photograph of dedication ceremony on September 25, 1949, with marker saying, "This Unit of 500 Acres in the National Tribute Grove is Preserved Through the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution to Honor Those Who Served in the Armed Forces of the United States in World War II and to Keep Inviolate These Primeval Sequoias as an American Heritage." Image PHO/1-B55F15 from Photograph Collection of Daughters of the American Revolution at www.collections.dar.org.



At the 1949 National Tribute Grove dedication ceremony, Newton Drury, Director of the National Park Service, spoke for all Americans when he said, "The National Tribute Grove was to be known as an ever-living memorial of external gratitude, eternally expressed to those men and women who served in the armed forces of the United States in World War II, and so preserved American Freedom." (Source: Historical Marker Database at HMdb.org; Save the Redwoods League website article dated 26 September 2014).

The GGNRA Park Archive & Records Center includes a historical photographic collection in index binders. Inside a binder of historical plaques and markers on the Presidio are images of markers and trees planted as memorials on the Presidio. The following images show three examples during the 1940s. The Army labeled these three markers as "moved for Letterman General Hospital (LGH) in 1963/1965." The Presidio Trust demolished the LGH during development of the Letterman Digital Arts Center in 2013 and it is not known if these markers exist today. The bottom marker shows the activities of the DAR (Source: photographs in photographic collection of the GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center, Amanda Williford, Curator & Reference Archivist).



Historical Marker – memorial tree planted in memory of John D. Foley, Lieutenant Colonel, MAC US Army 1887-1943. Labeled as moved for Letterman General Hospital 1963-1965. Source: Army Real Estate Records, Collection GOGA 35338, Box 250, Folder 4, Original Print, GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center.



Commemorative Plaque – Presidio: memorial tree planted in honor of Wallace Dewitt, Brigadier General, of the Medical Corps in U.S. Army, 1878-1949. Labeled as moved for Letterman General Hospital in 1963-1965. Source: Army Real Estate Records, Collection GOGA 35338, Box 308, Folder 1, Original Print, GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center.



Historical Marker – tree planted to honor service members in the armed forces. Logo on top is from the Daughters of the American Revolution, San Francisco Chapter. The marker does not have a date. Labeled as moved for Letterman General Hospital 1963-1965. Source: Army Real Estate Records, Collection GOGA 35338, Box 250, Folder 4, Original Print, GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center.

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) placed markers and planted trees primarily from the 1920s through 1960s. There were four San Francisco DAR Chapters acting under the California State Society. Any of them could have donated the three coast redwood trees for the garden:

SEQUOIA – organized 1891, named for the Giant Redwoods honoring the Cherokee Chief

LA PUERTA DE ORO – organized 1896, named for the Golden Gate

CALIFORNIA- organized 1896, named for the State of California

TAMALPAIS-organized 1907, named for Mt. Tamalpais or Bay Mountain

Three of the four chapters are now defunct with only La Puerta de Oro Chapter still active today. According to Erin Macias, Corresponding Secretary and Historian for the Presidio Chapter of the DAR, any of these San Francisco chapters could have been active on the Presidio during the 1920s to 1940s. In 1935, the DAR organized the original Presidio Chapter at the Presidio, and the Presidio Chapter was active in San Francisco for decades. The Presidio Chapter was not active in the late 1920s. The DAR started a new chapter on the Presidio in 2010 and the National Society allowed the chapter to reuse the name of the defunct Presidio Chapter. The current Presidio Chapter does not have records for any of the former San Francisco chapters and Erin Macias is doubtful that any record would exist at all—since record keeping was not common at that time. She recommended contacting the archive of the California State Society for records on the planting of redwood trees on the Presidio (Erin Macias, email communication 2022). However, the archives of the California State Society do not have records of a coast redwood tree planting on the Presidio in the 1920s or 1930s (Stein, Sherrie, email communication, 2 May 2022).

Two notable events occurred in the late 1920s that coincide with the planting of the Garden's coast redwood grove. On November 26, 1928, the DAR held a dedication ceremony at the Presidio's Pershing Square to commemorate a bronze tablet marker set in stone to honor the 1776 founding of the original Presidio. The bronze tablet exists today in Pershing Square as shown in the accompanying recent photograph. The DAR intended the tablet marker to show the northwest corner of the original Presidio of San Francisco garrison. Recent Presidio Trust archeological excavations reveal the 1928 tablet marker is situated at an inside building corner within the original Presidio garrison enclosure.

The photograph collection of the GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center (PARC) has photographs of the 1928 tablet marker unveiling, as shown on the following images. Members of D.A.R., the Patriotic Society, and the Army attended the tablet marker unveiling. Mrs. Joseph Moody, Regent of the California Chapter D.A.R. for 25 years, and Mrs. H.T. Gardenier, Secretary of California Chapter, unveiled the bronze tablet. Colonel Fred R. Brown, commanding officer of Presidio and 30th Infantry, with Mrs. John Keating, Regent California Chapter D.A.R. spoke at the unveiling. Mrs. Theodore Hoover, State Regent D.A.R., laid a wreath at base of the bronze tablet in honor of Lieutenant Moraga, the Spanish founder of the Presidio. Captain Warren J. Clear, 30th Infantry, explained the significance of historical markers to the crowd.

Tablet Marker at Pershing Square commemorating the original Presidio. Tablet Marker placed in 1928 by the California Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

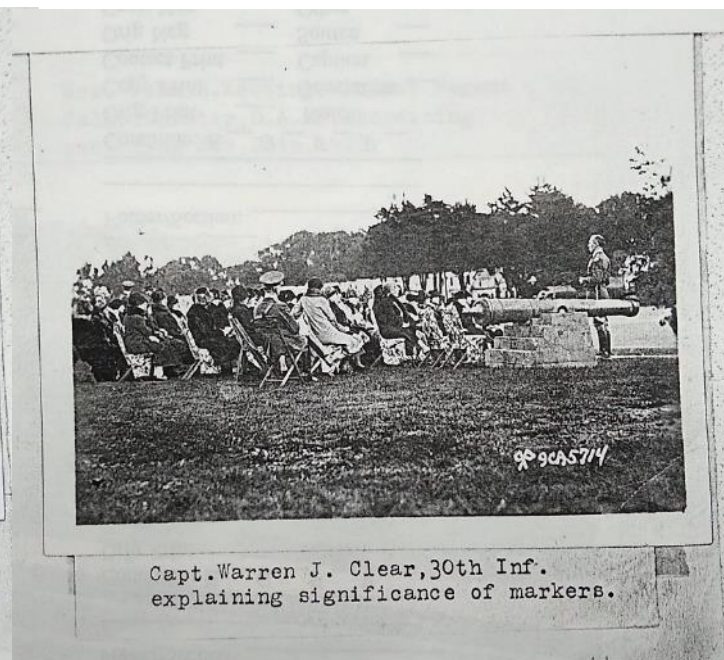
"This Tablet Marks the North West Corner of the Original Presidio of San Francisco Founded by the Spaniards Under Lieutenant Moraga September 17, 1776."

Later Presidio Trust archaeology excavation revealed this northwest corner was an interior room corner of the Presidio of San Francisco garrison.





Colonel Fred R. Brown, commanding Presidio and 30th Infantry, with Mrs. John Keating, Regent Calif. Chapter, D.A.R. at unveiling of Tablet marking original Presidio.



Capt. Warren J. Clear, 30th Inf. explaining significance of markers.

Bronze tablet unveiling ceremony by California State Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) on 26 November 1928 to commemorate the founding of Presidio and to mark the northwest corner of the original building. The DAR laid a wreath at the base of the marker in honor of Lieutenant Moraga, the Spanish founder of the Presidio in 1776. Source: original prints with captions in PAM Collection Box 4, Folder no. 10, GOGA-1766, GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center.

The 1928 ceremony commemorating the 1776 founding of the Presidio was an important public event conducted in a prominent place on the Presidio. Traditionally, a related ceremonial tree planting would have occurred during the event in Pershing Square. The photographic record of the tablet unveiling event does not mention or include photographs of any memorial tree planting in 1928.

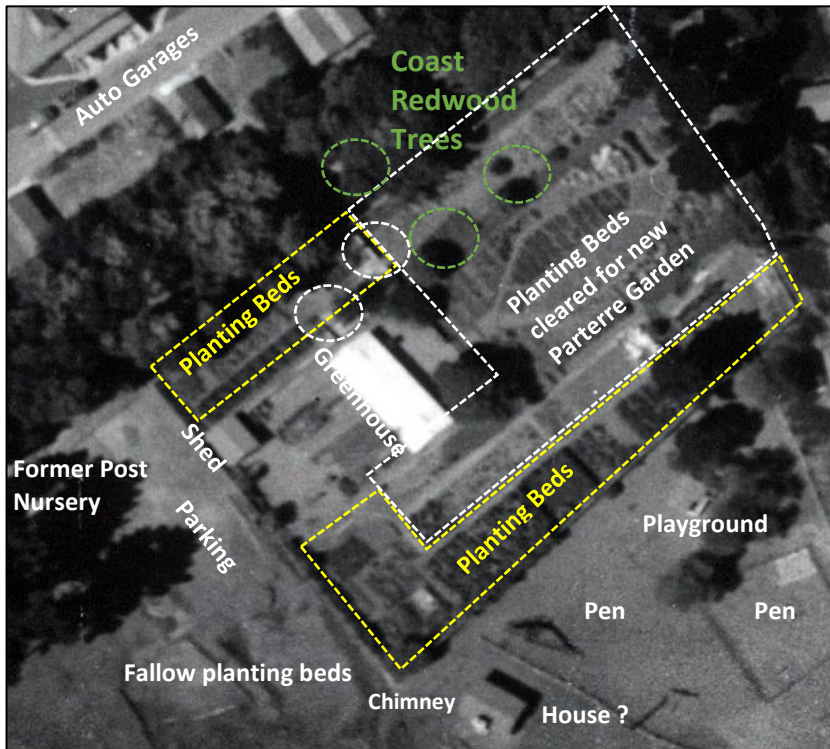
A second important event in the late 1920s may be a more likely candidate to explain why the Army planted the coast redwood tree grove in the Post Nursery. In January 1927, Brigadier General John P. Wisser died in San Francisco, and the Army buried him with honors in the prestigious San Francisco National Cemetery on the Presidio. Also in 1927, the Army may have named the entrance road to the Post Green House and Post Nursery as "Wisser Court" in his honor. Associated with the funeral of Brigadier General John P. Wisser in the 1920s, it would have been traditional to plant a memorial redwood tree or grove in honor of a former post commander.

In the 1920s, the Fort Scott Post Nursery was a secluded site surrounded by a barbed-wire security fence with no public access. As seen on the August 1938 aerial photograph (shown on page 16), the Army planted the three coast redwood trees outside of planting beds and alleyways—so as not to interfere with wheelbarrow traffic in the Post Nursery's upper terrace. It is possible that the DAR donated three coast redwood seedlings in 1927 to the Army in honor of Brigadier General John P. Wisser, the former post commander. The Post Nursery was an unlikely spot for a memorial redwood grove unless the site had a special meaning to the Army.

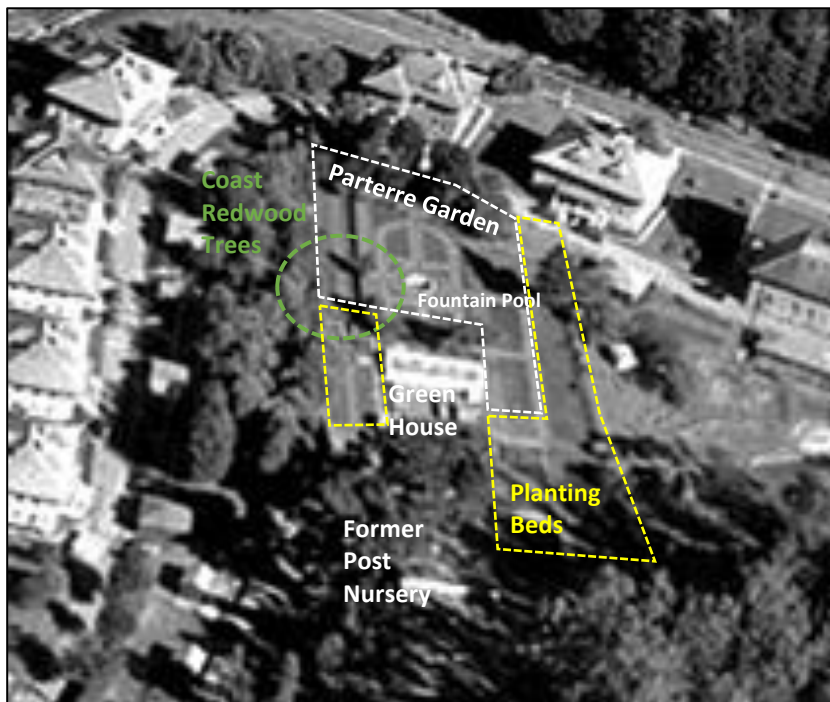
The Army may have planted the donated redwood trees in the Post Nursery because Colonel John P. Wisser, the first post commander, advocated for building the Post Nursery in 1912. It may not be a coincidence that the Army planted the redwood grove next to the Commanding Officer's Quarters at 12 Kobbe Avenue (now Building 1322), where Colonel John P. Wisser lived from 1912 to 1913 while serving as commanding officer of Fort Winfield Scott and building the original Post Nursery. To recognize the contributions of John P. Wisser, we refer to the coast redwood grove in this report as the Wisser Redwood Grove.

Parterre Rose Garden

The aerial photographs below show the significant changes in cultural landscape features surrounding the Post Green House between August 1938 (top) and 1939 (bottom). Cobblestone walls and access ramps built by Army-WPA-CCC from 1933-1938 are visible at the northwest end of the refurbished Post Green House (with a fresh coat of whitewash) in 1938. The August 1938 aerial photograph (top) shows extensive planting beds suggesting the cultivation of ornamental plants and vegetables across the entire facility. The August 1938 aerial photograph shows a large part of the eastern Post Green House planting beds as untended. The Army-WPA-CCC appears to be clearing the older planting beds for a new Parterre Rose Garden built in 1939.



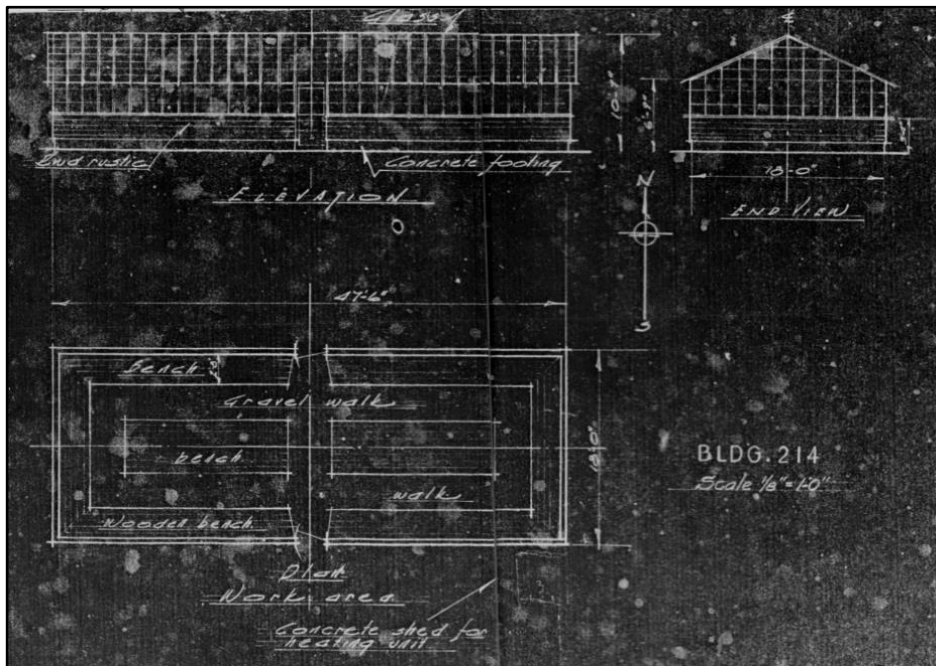
Closeup excerpt from August 1938 aerial photograph showing Post Nursery planting beds surrounding the gleaming white Post Green House refurbished by the Army-WPA-CCC in 1933-1938. Visible in the photo are masonry walls and two stone wheelbarrow ramps (white circles) constructed by the Army-WPA-CCC circa 1933-1938 for access to the upper planting bed terrace above. Coast redwood trees (green circles) planted in late 1920s. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. North to photo top. Source: San Francisco Public Library, David Rumsey Map Collection, San Francisco Aerial Photographs 1938, number 115. San Francisco Aerial Views, August 1938.



Closeup excerpt from 1939 oblique aerial photograph showing the new Army-WPA-CCC parterre rose garden with fountain pool, masonry walls, and geometric patterned alleys (white outline). The Army had expanded the Post Nursery (yellow outline) to the southwest (bottom of photo). Coast redwood trees with shadows (green circle) planted in late 1920s. North to photo upper left. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. Source: aerial photograph of Fort Winfield Scott 1939, San Francisco Bay Area Photo Blog, article titled Presidio of San Francisco gun batteries found on the coastal bluffs overlooking San Francisco Bay, dated 18 June 2018.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA 1935-1943) designed and funded public parks during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The WPA engaged landscape architect William S. Wiedorn of the Olmsted Brothers, architect Richard Koch who became famous for the Historic American Buildings Survey, and prominent Art Deco artists to design the public parks and gardens. In the 1930s, the WPA was building formal rose gardens across the nation and San Francisco Bay Area.

The Berkeley California Rose Garden and Oakland Municipal Rose Garden were the first of the New Deal's Civil Works Progress projects conceived in 1933. In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt commissioned Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. to redesign the White House Rose Garden. Opened in 1936, the WPA founded the classical garden called New Orleans City Park (now Botanical Gardens). The City Park included a designated Parterre Rose Garden with rose beds divided by brick paths that intersect at a small round fountain pool. The WPA built the San Jose Rose Garden in 1938-1939. Fort Winfield Scott's parterre rose garden may be a surviving example of WPA-era parterre rose garden design.



Post Green House - building P-214 plan from 1933-1938 Army-WPA-CCC rehabilitation of the greenhouse removing the original building wings / add-on sheds and adding a new gas-fired boiler steam heating system and roof louver vents. Source: GGNRA Park Archive & Records Center (PARC), Collection Name: Presidio Building Book #1200-1649, Collection Number: GOGA 32421 B6/6, courtesy of Amanda Williford, PARC Curator & Reference Archivist.



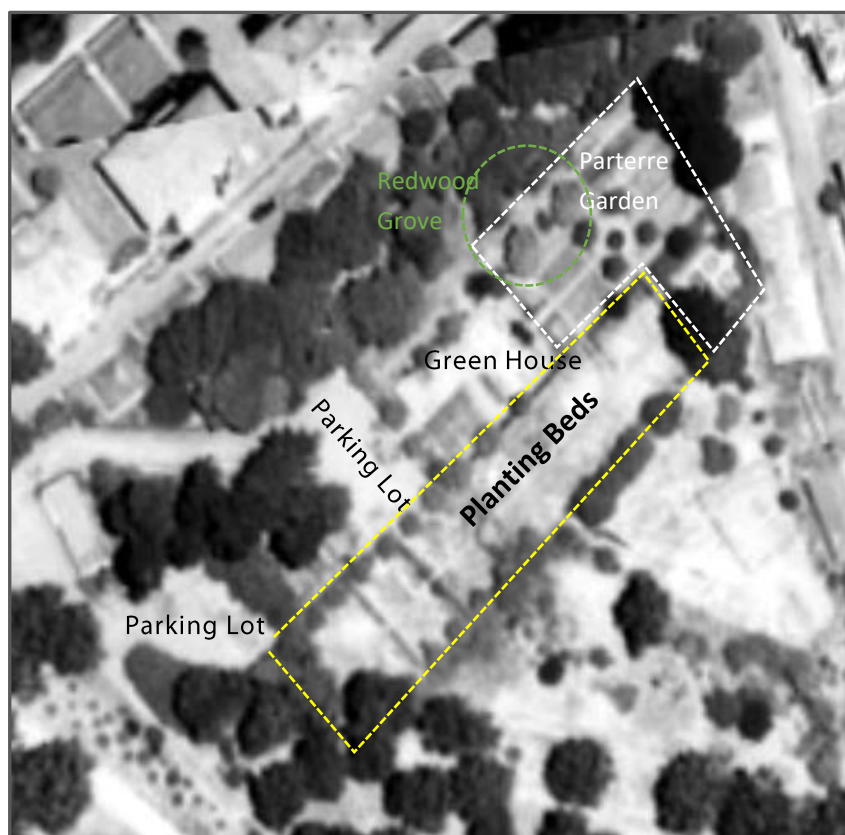
Photograph above shows Fort Winfield Scott's remodeled Post Green House - building P-214 / T-1327 surrounded by Post Nursery planting beds. Undated photograph from sometime after the 1933-1938 greenhouse rehabilitation by Army-WPA-CCC. Source: GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center (PARC), Post Engineers Office Historical Records GOGA 39814, Box 7 Folder 12.

By the time of the 1939 aerial photograph, the Army-WPA-CCC work appears complete on the new parterre rose garden. A parterre is a formal garden of planting beds called plats with symmetrical patterns separated by distinct alleys with a central fountain. The Army replaced parts of the Post Nursery with parterre planting beds, a fountain pool, cobblestone walls, crushed rock alleys (later covered with asphalt), and paver stone stairways. To replace the planting beds appropriated by the parterre rose garden, the Army expanded the Post Nursery to the southwest in three large terraces on the original Post Nursery site below Wright Loop.

Fort Winfield Scott served as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) training and supply facility between 1933 and 1939. In 1936, the WPA and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers built Treasure Island for the 1939-1940 Golden Gate International Exposition (World's Fair) to celebrate the completion of the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco Bay Bridge. From 1933-1939, the U.S. Works Projects Administration (WPA) was active in Fort Winfield Scott and the Presidio Post. WPA Project 2-B15-257 funded improvements in the appearance and maintenance of both posts while also supplying local employment opportunities.

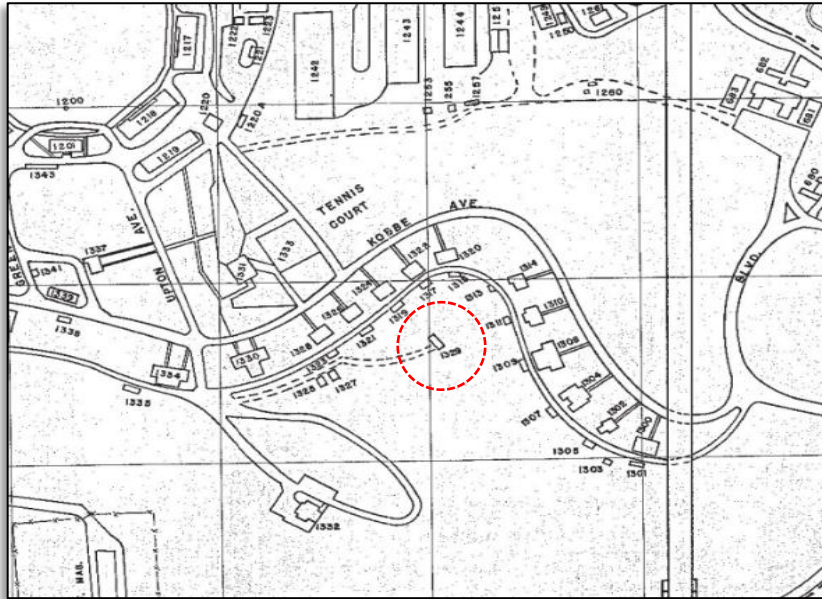
The Army and CCC, with WPA funding, widened and paved roads, improved buildings, constructed the Presidio Theater and log cabin clubhouse, leveled the main parade ground, built a ball diamond, cleared brush and fire hazards, removed fallen logs, built fire breaks, planted ice plant and Acacia trees, and made landscaping improvements. The *Fort Scott Cultural Landscape Assessment* says that in

1938-1939 the workers laid out "parterre planting beds" and built "rubble masonry walls" and "a path system" at the "community garden area" south of Hitchcock Street (Presidio Trust March 2008). The workers repaired the greenhouse and built masonry ramps and a pool (WPA 1938).



Closeup excerpt from 1948 aerial photograph showing 1938-1939 Army-CCC-WPA improvements at parterre rose garden northeast of the Post Green House. North to top of photo. The expansion of planting beds is visible to the southwest in large terraces. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. Reference: Presidio Trust March 2008 page 72.

The accompanying 1948 aerial photograph shows the 1938-1939 Army-CCC-WPA parterre rose garden on the eastern third of the Fort Scott Post Nursery. The parterre rose garden replaced the earlier planting beds used by the Army during the Great Depression of the 1930s. As shown on the 1948 aerial photograph, during World War II, the Army removed areas of the parterre rose garden plots installed in 1938-1939 and created new larger planting beds along the southern boundary of the Post Nursery. During World War II from 1941 to 1944, a revival of the victory garden war effort campaign resulted in the revival and expansion of victory gardens across the nation. During the 1940s, the Army increased vegetable cultivation in the expanded planting beds, in a revival of the post's earlier World War I victory garden.



Closeup excerpt from 1949 Fort Winfield Scott map showing the Post Green House numbered as building 1329 at the end of present-day Wisser Court (at red circle annotation by Mark Youngkin 2022). New auto garage buildings 1325 and 1327 have replaced the original 1912 Post Nursery buildings. Reference: Presidio Trust March 2008 page 72.

The accompanying present-day photographs show examples of the 1933-1939 Army-WPA-CCC cultural landscape features including the parterre rose garden with a central cobblestone fountain pool, paved alleyways, a cobblestone-paver stone stairway, and a cobblestone wall with stone wheelbarrow access ramp. Like a traditional Victorian parterre garden, the original design surrounded the central fountain pool with green lawn. Alleyways would have had a gravel surface before the Army later paved with asphalt. The fountain pool masonry shows mounting holes as evidence of a former upright canopy structure covering the fountain pool. The original design may have the planting beds surrounding the fountain pool planted with roses.



Present-day view of 1938-1939 Army-WPA-CCC cobble stone fountain pool listed in WPA records within the parterre rose garden. The untended parterre rose garden became overgrown by acacia forest and ground cover until restored by garden volunteers and Presidio Trust staff from 2002 to 2010.



Present-day view of cleared and exposed 1938-1939 Army-WPA-CCC cobblestone walls and paver stone stairway connecting upper greenhouse terrace with lower parterre planting beds. Note Holly trees at top of the steps, which are visible in an earlier photo flanking the entrance to the greenhouse.

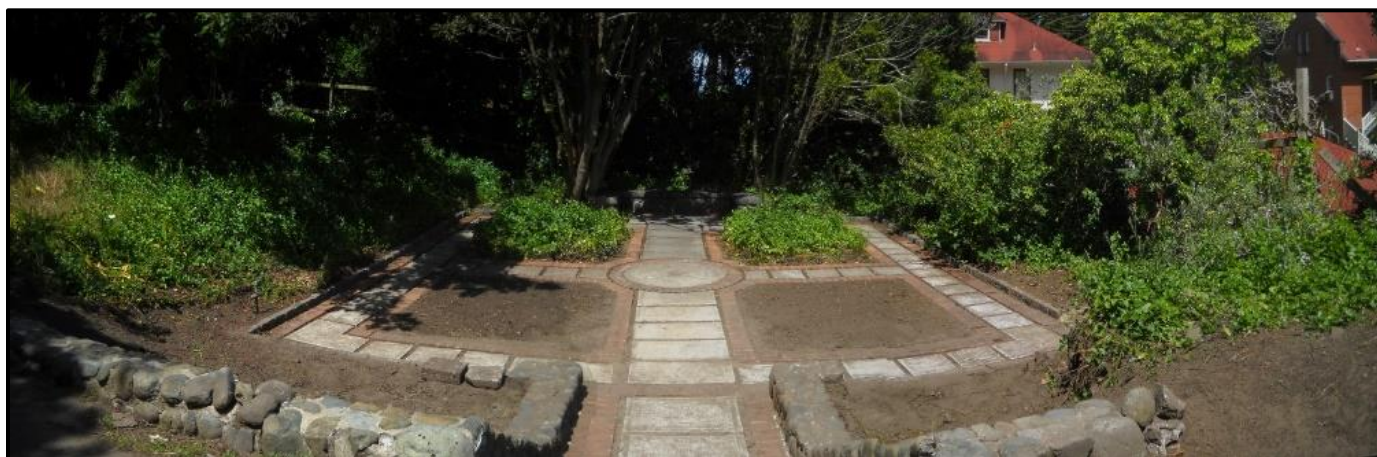


Present-day view of cobble stone masonry wall and paver stone wheelbarrow ramp in upper planting bed terrace dating from 1933-1938 Army-WPA-CCC work to improve the Post Green House.

The Army situated the Post Nursery and Post Green House on a south-facing hillside with maximum sun exposure to counteract the foggy and cool Mediterranean microclimate along the Pacific Ocean coastline. The Army graded the hillside into three main terraced benches—each terrace bench had level planting beds with stairways and wheelbarrow ramps between terraces. The terraces also allowed the Army to import topsoil to fill each terrace on top of the native sand soil. No known photographs of the Post Nursery or parterre rose garden survive to show us what it looked like at the peak of agricultural activity in the 1930s to 1940s.

The northernmost terrace had planting beds in two terraces within a strip from the parking lot to the eastern boundary fence. Today, Acacia trees, vinca, and ivy grow on the garden's upper terrace, which community gardeners are slowly clearing and replanting. A large central terrace (current community garden site) held the Post Green House and victory garden planting beds. The Army created the central terrace with small retaining walls down the slope of the hillside. The Army built no discernible drainage system for the stormwater runoff from Wisser Court, and small drainage ditches may have traversed between the planting beds.

The lowest eastern terraces held planting beds from circa 1915 to the 1930s. By 1939, the Army-WPA-CCC built a parterre rose garden with a fountain replacing the earlier planting beds. The lowest southern section of the parterre rose garden has a distinctive geometric pattern as shown in the following photograph. This area is now an herb garden surrounded by bay laurel trees, red flowering buckeye trees, and quince trees.



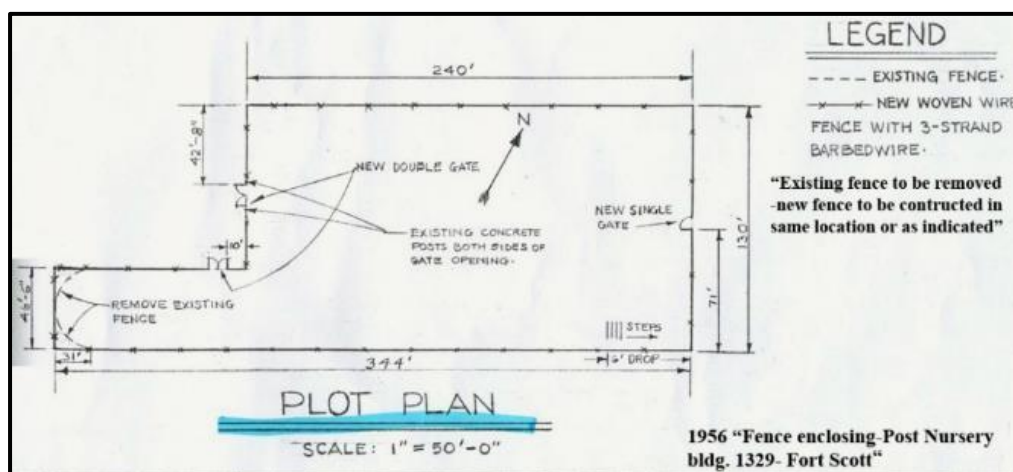
Photograph from 2010 showing part of 1938-1939 Army-WPA-CCC geometric planting beds, alleyways, and masonry cobblestone walls in the eastern part of parterre rose garden. This garden pattern resembles a traditional Victorian parterre garden design. Fill dirt and invasive ivy covered the geometric pattern until cleared by volunteer gardeners and Presidio Trust staff/interns from 2002 through 2011. In 2011-2013, Garden staff and volunteer gardeners planted this part of the parterre rose garden as an Herb Garden.

In 1941, the Army built two 5-car parking garages (buildings P-227/T-1325 and P-228/T-1327) along Wisser Court, replacing former Post Nursery buildings built in 1912. In 1996, the first community gardeners used one of the 1941 garage units to store garden tools until they built the Gardener's Shed in 1997. As shown on the drawing on the following page titled Historical 1942-1948 Garden Conditions, a 1942 base facility map shows the layout and perimeter fence surrounding the Post Nursery and Post Green House (U.S. Army 1942). The drawing shows the Commanding Officer Quarters at 1322 Kobbe Avenue (originally 12 Kobbe Avenue in 1910 and later 31 Kobbe Avenue) adjoining the Post Nursery on the north. In 1943, the Army built a new commanding officer's residence at 1332 Wright Loop uphill from the former Post Nursery (Thompson 1997, Presidio Trust 2008).

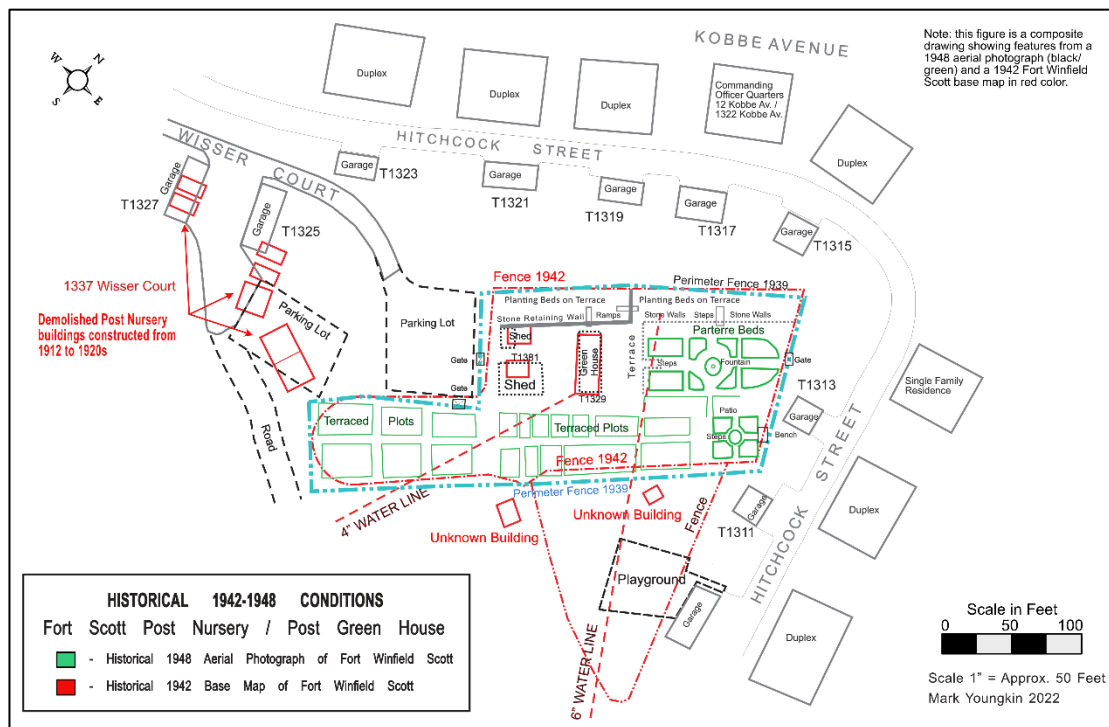
In 1946, following the end of World War II, the Army downgraded Fort Winfield Scott to a sub-post of the larger Presidio of San Francisco. A 1948 aerial photograph shows the Post Nursery with the 1938-1939 Army-WPA-CCC parterre rose garden. The Post Nursery and Post Green House (building 1329) appear active in the 1948 aerial photograph. A 1949 Fort Winfield Scott map shows the Post Green House building P-214 labeled as building T-1329. The Army shut down the obsolete Coast Artillery division and artillery school in 1950. The 1956 Plot Plan below shows a new perimeter fence with gates surrounding the Post Nursery and Post Green House, replacing the original security fencing. Based on the construction of a new security fence in 1956, the Post Nursery and Post Green House appear active during and following the Korean War (1950-1953). The Army originally strung the security fence with barbed wire along the top. Along the southern fence line adjoining the wooded area, gardeners found a 2x2-foot hole that poachers had cut in the wire along the bottom of the fence – big enough for someone to crawl through. The Army had patched the hole using a discarded 3x3-foot fence gate like that found on an animal pen. Apparently poaching vegetables was also a problem in the past.



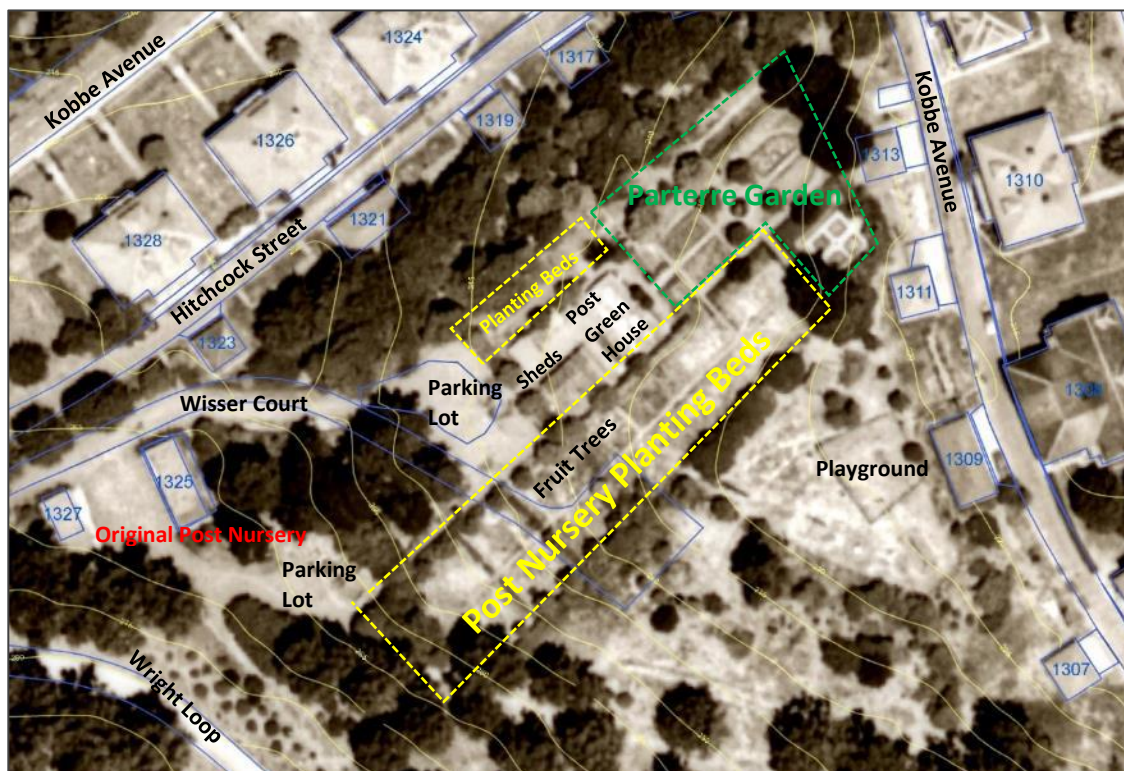
Photograph dated 2006 showing section of 1956 perimeter fence surrounding the Post Green House and Post Nursery. As shown in the photograph, portions of the 1956 fence still exist but are deteriorating due to damage from falling Acacia trees. Image 2006 courtesy of Barbara Corff.



Plot Plan dated 1956 and titled "1956 Fence enclosing Post Nursery bldg. 1329- Fort Scott." Blue highlight by Barbara Corff and Damian Raffa in 2008. Reference: U.S. Army 1956, plan at GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center, image courtesy Barbara Corff.

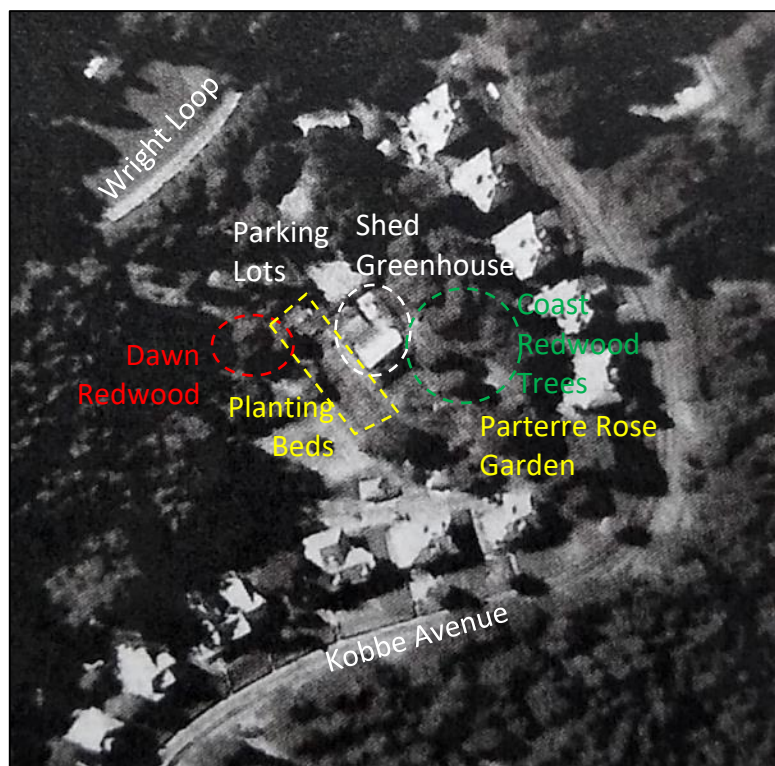


A drawing combining historical features from 1942 facilities map and 1948 aerial photograph showing extensive 1933-1939 Army-WPA-CCC improvements to and expansion of Fort Scott Post Nursery to southwest. Source: original drawing by Mark Youngkin 2006-2022.



Closeup excerpt from larger drawing titled *Community Garden 1948 Aerial Photo Rectification, Kobbe Ave. Community Gardens*, courtesy Hans Barnaal, Presidio Trust, October 11, 2006, 1-foot contours in yellow color, 2000 roads & buildings shown in blue color. A row of fruit trees may line the northwest boundary of the Post Nursery. North towards top. Annotations in yellow, green, and red by Mark Youngkin 2022.

By the time of the 1958 aerial photograph shown below, the parterre rose garden and Post Nursery planting beds appear less active. The resolution of the aerial photograph is poor, and it is difficult to discern features on the ground. However, the planting beds and alleys are not as distinct as before and cultivation may be at a lower activity level by the end of the 1950s. Plant cultivation may be occurring mostly indoors within the Post Green House that the Army-CCC-WPA rehabilitated in 1933-1938.



Closeup excerpt from 1958 aerial photograph showing 1915 Post Green House building 214 rehabilitated in 1938. The Post Nursery planting beds appear at a lower activity level. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. North towards top of photo. Source: black and white copy of aerial photograph in "Aerials" photograph collection binder, GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center.

The Army reduced cultivation in the Post Nursery planting beds after the Army built the new wood-fiberglass greenhouse building T-1381 in 1959. In a 1969 aerial photograph, the new larger wood-fiberglass Post Green House structure is present in a new location with closer access to the parking lot on Wisser Court. In 1959, the Army demolished the original Post Green House Building P-214/T-1327 constructed in 1915 and remodeled in 1938-1939, and it is not visible on the 1969 aerial photograph.

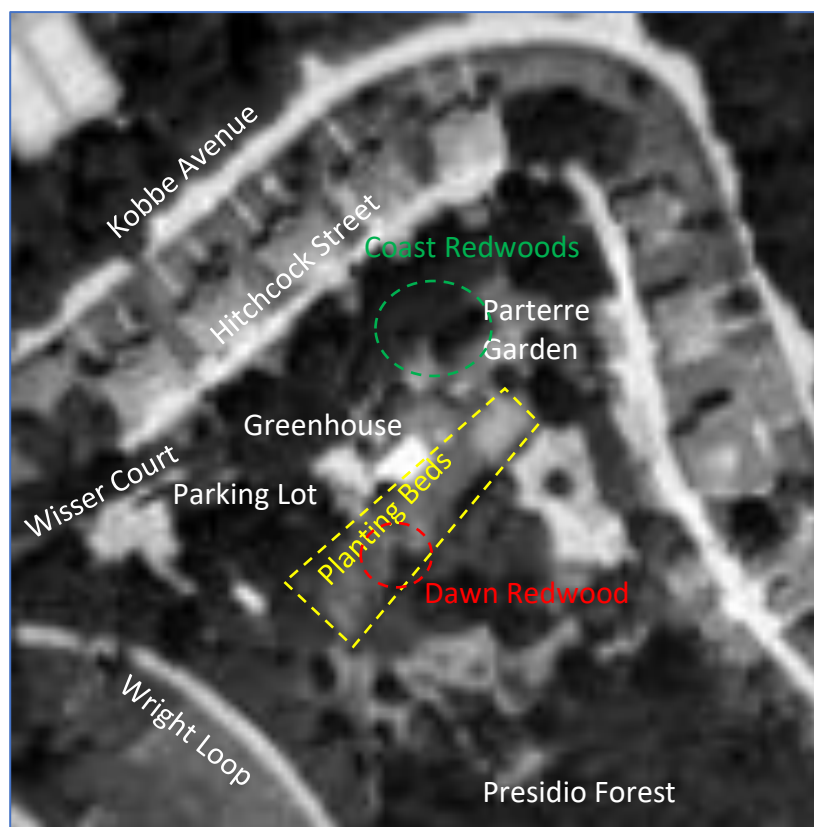
In 1959, the Army replaced the original 1915 Post Green House building P-214/T-1327 (rehabilitated with WPA funds in 1938), with a new wood and fiberglass greenhouse building T-1381. The new 1,426 square foot greenhouse had a wood foundation, dirt floor, with glass-wire walls and roof (Source: GGNRA Park Archive & Records Center, collection ADPWEMR-6 B3, 1 502-02 Demolition Bldg. 1381). Plant cultivation is now mostly indoors in the new greenhouse. The outdoor planting beds appear untended by the 1969 aerial photograph.



Wood and fiberglass Post Green House replacement built in 1959. Source: photographs by U.S. Army 1985 in GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center (PARC), duplicate photographs weeded by PARC in 2008 and now in collection of Barbara E. Corff.

On the 1969 aerial photograph shown below, the masonry fountain pool and parterre rose garden walkways are visible and appear tended by gardeners. The parterre rose garden may have continued as a flower garden for Kobbe Officers' Quarters families in the 1960s and early 1970s during the Vietnam War. The former Post Nursery planting beds (shown in yellow outline) appear untended since the alleyways and paths between terraces and planting beds are no longer visible on the 1969 aerial photograph.

The 1969 aerial photograph shows the dawn redwood tree (*Metasequoia*) planted circa 1956 within the area of untended planting beds. To the west of the dawn redwood tree, recent mass grading of this area during the Wright Loop Reforestation project found remnant rebar stakes, wood terrace walls, concrete foundation walls, paver stones, fence posts, water line, and abandoned water faucets in the former planting beds.



Closeup excerpt from June 27, 1969, aerial photograph showing new wood-fiberglass greenhouse built in 1959. The former extent of the planting beds is visible to the southwest (within yellow outline). North direction towards top of photo. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. Source: OpenSFHistory-Historical Images of San Francisco at website opensfhistory.org, photo ID 2622-1-78, June 27, 1969, wnp31.1969.078.

In the 1950-1960s, corporate food production and distribution spread countrywide with local supermarkets in most neighborhoods. Food shortages and victory gardens became a fading memory. The Army reduced cultivation at the Post Nursery following construction of the new fiberglass Post Green House in 1959. Army cultivation of plants and flowers continued within the new fiberglass greenhouse through the 1960s and 1970s, while outdoor cultivation appears to have mostly ceased surrounding the Post Green House.

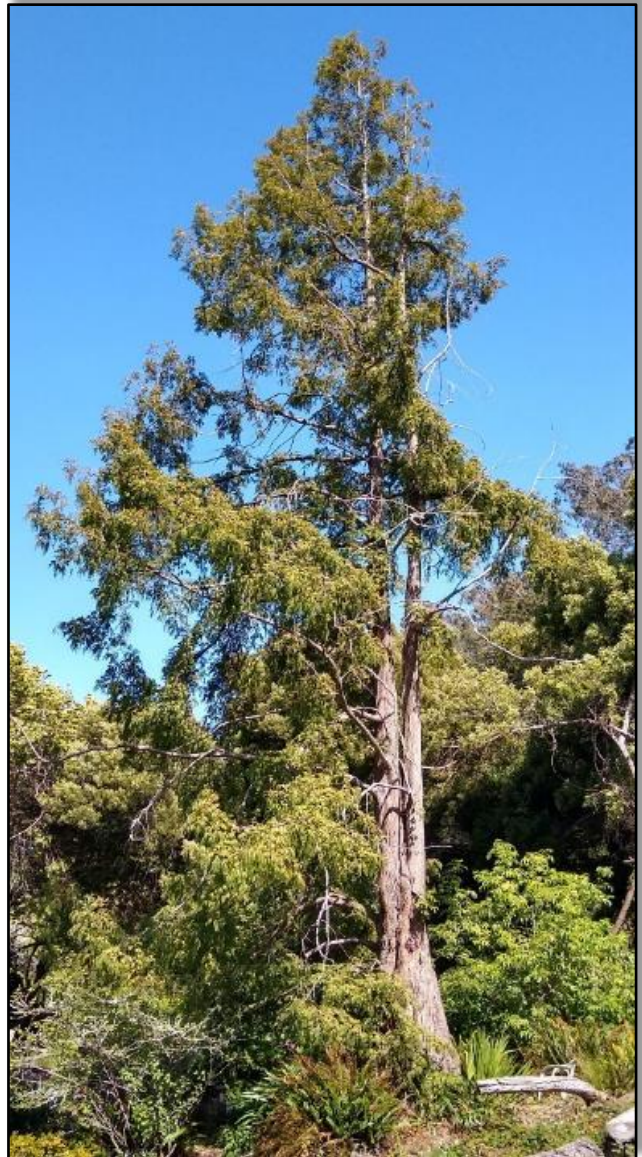
By 1972, the Presidio post built a Post Exchange or 'PX', a department-style store selling clothing and other items to service members along with a small commissary grocery store. In 1980, the Army built a new larger Commissary grocery store next to the PX. By the time of the 1985 post building assessment, the Army is no longer using the Post Green House and the Army labeled it as obsolete. A 1985 photograph shows that the Army had been salvaging fiberglass panels from the sides of the vacant greenhouse. The Army demolished the greenhouse structure in 1986 leaving the Garden site as vacant land. The 74-year history of agricultural cultivation at Fort Winfield Scott's Post Nursery, Post Green House, and surrounding victory garden planting beds ended unceremoniously. The overgrown planting beds and parterre rose garden became a wild playground for the children from the surrounding residences.

Dawn Redwood

The Garden's dawn redwood tree (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) sits on a windy ridgetop just inland from Baker Beach on the Golden Gate Strait. The tree is about 70 feet tall with a 9-foot girth at chest height. The tree is the same size (9-foot girth) as a dawn redwood tree planted in 1949 at the Hoyt Arboretum in Portland, Oregon (Hoyt Arboretum website 2022). The tree top is scraggly and Presidio Foresters believe the tree has been dessicated from exposure to persistent winds. Until recently, a stand of dense Acacia trees shaded the dawn redwood tree. The tree is missing branches and in the past, the tree suffered limb damage from large falling Acacia trees. In her garden journal, Jean Koch recorded that a large Acacia tree fell in December 2002 next to the Dawn Redwood tree during high winds damaging the tree. As a living fossil, the dawn redwood tree deserves special care as an elder sentinel watching over the community garden (Dawn Redwood references: E.D. Merrill, 1998; Coronado Eagle and Journal, 22 May 1969; Hilary Clark, 4 February 2001; J. Ma 2002, 2003).

A Presidio arboretist mentioned three dawn redwood trees presently exist on the Presidio. One dawn redwood tree may exist near the former commanding officer's residence on Simonds Loop. On May 20, 2017, a dawn redwood sapling was planted in honor of Presidio Trust forester Peter Ehrlich next to the Andy Goldsworthy Spire sculpture on Arguello Boulevard.

Summer view looking south at the community garden's Dawn Redwood tree (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) in June 2022. Mark Youngkin estimated the dawn redwood tree at 9-foot girth, about 70 feet tall, and about 70 years old. The Army would have planted the tree in the 1950s.



The dawn redwood tree (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) is known as the water fir tree in China. Articles by Jinshuang Ma in 2002 and 2003 supply a chronology for the discovery and world-wide spread of the dawn redwood tree. In 1939-1941, Japanese paleontologist Shigeru Miki described 150-million-year-old leaf fossils as a new genus of the deciduous conifer tree. The ancient *Metasequoia* leaf fossils occur in rocks throughout China, North America, and Japan. In 1943, Chinese botanist Chan Wang found a thousand extant trees as a "living fossil" growing in a remote area of China. He sent specimens to Chinese botanists W.C. Cheng and Hsen Hsu Hu. The botanists announced the discovery of living *Metasequoia* trees in 1946 after more collecting expeditions. Dr. Hu reported the discovery to paleobotanist Dr. Ralph W. Chaney, professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and paleobotanist / Arnold Arboretum Director Dr. Elmer D. Merrill of Harvard University. Dr. Hu attended Harvard University and he sent representative tree specimens to the Arnold Arboretum.

In 1947, the American Philosophical Society, Dr. Elmer D. Merrill, and Dr. Ralph W. Chaney sponsored a scientific expedition of Chinese botanists to collect tree specimens, seedlings, and seeds in the "type area" and the "Metasequoia Valley" in China. In late 1947, Chinese botanists sent seeds of the "dinosaur tree" or "botanical dinosaur" to the Arnold Arboretum and other arboretums in Missouri, Denmark, Netherlands, mainland Europe, and India. The Chinese botanists and the Arnold Arboretum distributed the Metasequoia seeds widely to colleagues and institutions across the world.

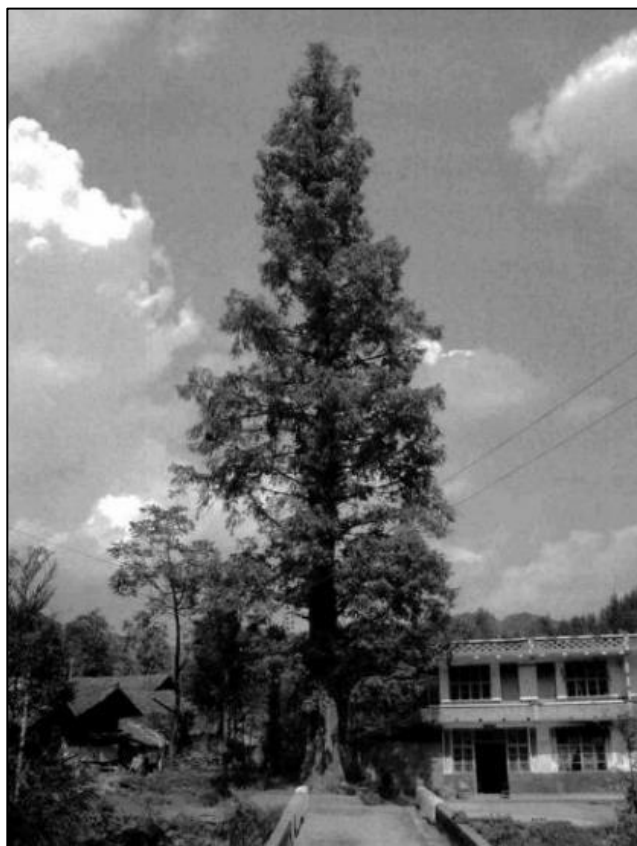
In January 1948, a Chinese botanist sent two bags of Metasequoia seeds to the University of California Botanical Garden (UCBG) in Berkeley, which propagated the seeds in its greenhouses. Professor Chaney collected more seeds and seedlings during his February 1948 expedition to China funded by the Save the Redwoods League. The UCBG's first accession record of the planting of Metasequoia seedlings is in 1949 (UCBG website 2022). The Chaney expedition saw thousands of Metasequoia trees growing in the Szechuan's "Metasequoia Valley" and Professor Chaney described seeing the largest Metasequoia tree shown in the accompanying photograph:

We stood beneath the great tree, our hands upon its gray, red-flecked bark, our eyes uplifted to branches which rose nearly a hundred feet above. Here was a fossil come to life, a giant whose kind had persisted out of the past to tell us the story of the earth millions of years before man came to live on it.

San Francisco Chronicle science writer Milton Silverman went with the 1948 China expedition and his newspaper articles describe the journey in sensational detail. Silverman and his editorial staff coined the popular name "dawn redwood." In 1948, Dr. Ralph Chaney distributed Metasequoia seeds and seedlings widely across California, Oregon, and Alaska. Later in July 1948, another China dawn redwood expedition, joined by the California Academy of Sciences, was the last foreign team in the Metasequoia "type area" for the next 30 years. The People's Republic of China closed the country in 1949. Preservationists have extensively planted the Metasequoia tree along the west coast of North America. Because of logging and habitat destruction, the endangered tree is declining where it naturally occurs in China.

In the 1940s, there was a successful alliance between Professor Ralph W. Chaney, the University of California Botanical Garden in Berkeley, the Save the Redwoods League, Garden Club of America, and the Daughters of the American Revolution to protect old growth coast redwood groves in California. The Save the Redwoods League had funded Chaney's 1948 expedition to China to bring back seeds and seedlings of the dawn redwood, propagated at the University of California Botanical Garden in Berkeley. Ralph Chaney later became president of the Save the Redwoods League. San Francisco's Strybing Arboretum received Metasequoia seeds circa 1948, but the Arboretum did not keep records for tree planting until 1958. Professor Ralph Chaney planted the first dawn redwood trees during 1949—the earliest date for planting of the Garden's dawn redwood tree.

Tallest known Metasequoia tree in China at 400 years old, 120-feet tall, and over 7½-foot girth, with religious shrine at base. Image 2003 by Jinshuang Ma, Brooklyn Botanic Garden (Ma, Jinshuang 2002, 2003).



The San Francisco Botanical Garden (SFBG), formerly Strybing Arboretum, now has fifteen *Metasequoia* trees. At the SFBG, Mark Youngkin noted the oldest dawn redwood trees to have multi-trunk girths of 12 to 15 feet. Victoria “Tori” Stewart, Plant Records Manager, says that SFBG records start in 1958. Tori found two *Metasequoia* accessions listed in the SFBG archive that predate 1958, but with no specific dates. All she could deduce is that the arboretum planted its oldest *Metasequoia* trees between 1948 and 1958. Librarian Brandy Kuhl could find no SFBG documents on dawn redwoods, but she agrees it is likely the arboretum obtained its oldest *Metasequoia* trees from Prof. Ralph Chaney after his 1948 China expedition to recover seedlings. Staff of the SFBG could find no information on the origin of the Presidio's dawn redwood seedling or planting of the Presidio's *Metasequoia* tree (B. Kuhl & V. Stewart, personal communication 2022).



April 2022 Dawn Redwood trees at the San Francisco Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park.



Dawn Redwood Trees at San Francisco Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park.

The California State Society and Chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) planted dawn redwood seedlings as memorial trees from 1949 through 1980s. Amanda Fulcher Vasquez, Archivist and Digital Asset Specialist for the National Society of the DAR, supplied online access and query results for the search term “dawn redwood” in the DAR online

newsletter archive (Amanda Vasquez, email communication, 2022).

The historical newsletters have DAR Chapter reports on the planting of memorial dawn redwood trees in California. On March 1, 1952, Arbor Day, the Fresno Chapter planted a *Metasequoia* dawn redwood tree in the DAR memorial coast redwood grove at Fresno's Roeding Park (Source: DAR online digital newsletter archive, August 1952, page 893).

On June 6, 1952, the Gaspar de Portola DAR chapter of Palo Alto planted a dawn redwood tree on Flag Day at Eleanor Pardee Park in Palo Alto. The chapter had previously planted a coastal redwood tree as a memorial to the chapter's founders. After a business meeting, picnic, and patriotic music

program, the DAR dedicated the dawn redwood to the President General, Ms. James B. Patton. Prof. Ralph Chaney, who brought the seeds and seedlings back from China in 1948, donated the seedling and attended the dedication. The dawn redwood seedling was hand raised for a year in the yard of Ms. Charles Haskell Danforth, Reporter General to the Smithsonian Institution (Source: DAR online digital newsletter archive, November 1952, page 1162-1163).

On 3 November 1953, the DAR California State Society sponsored the dedication and planting of a dawn redwood tree at Stanford University on the grounds of the Hoover House in honor of President Herbert Hoover. The Gaspar de Portola DAR Chapter of Palo Alto conducted the tree ceremony with the attendance of Prof. Ralph Chaney, who brought the first dawn redwood trees to California from China in 1948. Herbert Hoover's three-year-old great granddaughter turned the first trowelful of earth (Source: DAR online digital newsletter archive, March 1954, page 252).

A 1956 edition of The Star Presidian newspaper has one sentence that says "Also located on Pershing Square is a Dawn Redwood tree planted by the Daughters of the American Revolution, whose organization is responsible for the erection of many markers on the Presidio" (The Star Presidian 1956). The Army planted the tree before the 1956 article was published in The Star Presidian.

From 1949 through the 1950s, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) was planting dawn redwood trees memorials in the San Francisco Bay area. According to Erin Macias, Corresponding Secretary and Historian for the Presidio Chapter of the DAR—founded in 2010, all six San Francisco chapters could have been planting trees on the Presidio during 1949 to the 1950s. The Presidio Chapter does not have records for the former 1930's chapter, and Erin is doubtful that any records exist from the other defunct San Francisco chapters.

Erin Macias recommended contacting the archive of the California State Society (Erin Macias, 2022 email communication). Mark Youngkin contacted Sherrie Stein, State Historian for the Daughters of the American Revolution - California State Society (DAR-CSS), with a search request in May 2022. Records for the following DAR-CSS dawn redwood tree plantings were located (Stein, Sherrie, email communication, 2 May 2022):

6 June 1952	Eleanor Pardee Park in Palo Alto
27 March 1954	in the Presidio of San Francisco found 60 feet from the flagpole and saluting guns
8 October 1955	Harvey West Park, Santa Cruz
26 September 1975	Marker between two dawn redwoods planted on lawn of the County Courthouse in Mendocino

The DAR California State Society information indicates the DAR planted a dawn redwood tree on March 27th, 1954, located 60 feet from the flagpole and saluting guns in Pershing Square. It confirms The Star Presidian newspaper account from 1956 saying a dawn redwood tree was planted in Pershing Square. The reason for the planting is not listed, but it can be assumed it was to honor General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing (1860-1948), who was commanding officer of the Presidio from 1913-1915. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. General Pershing began his rise through the ranks of the U.S. Army with distinguished service in the Spanish-American War and the Philippines. After leading U.S. forces in pursuit of the Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa, Pershing served as commander of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) during World War I. When Pershing returned home, Congress made him only the second person (after George Washington and Winfield Scott) to be honored with the rank of "General of the Armies of the United States."

In 1951, the Army built a large flagpole, two salute cannons, and extensive concrete patios and walkways on Pershing Square in honor of Brigadier General John Pershing. A year later in 1952, a large plaque was installed at Pershing Square to honor General Pershing. The memorial was located on the site of the Pershing House, which was destroyed by fire in 1915 killing his wife and three of his children. During the early 1950s, the gift of a Dawn Redwood tree seedling would have likely come from Professor Ralph Chaney of UC Berkeley. Christa Conforti, Integrated Pest Management Specialist for the Presidio Trust, recalls that former Presidio Forester Peter Ehrlich had said the Garden's dawn redwood was a gift presented to the Army (Christa Conforti, personal communication, 2022).

On May 6, 2022, Barbara Corff and Mark Youngkin inspected Pershing Square with Edward De Haro, Archaeology Technician, and Georgie DeAntoni, Archaeological Specialist for the Presidio Trust, for evidence of the past planting of a dawn redwood tree in 1954. Two trees are presently located within 60 feet of the flagpole and both are Palm trees. No tree, stump, depression, or marker is present about 60 feet from the flagpole in any direction that would show the past planting of a dawn redwood tree.

Historical aerial photographs of Pershing Square suggest that a redwood tree has not existed within a 60-foot radius or beyond from the flagpole for at least four decades. Two historical markers are located outside of the 60-foot radius dated 1928 and 1976, neither pertain to a 1954 tree planting. The accompanying figure shows a red star at the postulated 1954 planting site of the dawn redwood tree about 60 feet north from the flagpole and saluting guns.



Closeup excerpt of Pershing Square showing estimated site (red star) of the ceremonial dawn redwood tree planted on Saturday 27 March 1954 by the California State Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. A record in the DAR archive shows the dawn redwood tree was planted "60 feet from flagpole and saluting guns." No dawn redwood tree, stump, depression, or marker exists today. No tree has existed within a 60-foot radius of the flagpole for at least four decades. Source: Present-day aerial photograph 2022 from Google.com/maps/, annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022.

Because a tall dawn redwood tree growing next to the Main Post flagpole would eventually block the view of the American flag, Mark Youngkin believes the Army transplanted the dawn redwood tree while still a sapling from Pershing Square to the Post Nursery circa 1956. The hypothesis that the Army moved the DAR dawn redwood tree planted in 1954 at Pershing Square is based on the following observations:

- There is no documentation on the planting of the Garden's dawn redwood tree and the Presidio Forester said only that the tree was a gift to the Army.
- The 1954 dawn redwood tree planted at Pershing Square would now be about the same age as the Garden's dawn redwood tree based on its height and girth.
- The planting of a dawn redwood tree in 1954 is a prestigious event suitable for ceremonial ground such as Pershing Square to honor a famous general. A DAR record documents the 1954 planting of a dawn redwood at Pershing Square in a public ceremony to honor General John J. Pershing.
- No other planting of a dawn redwood tree by the DAR is documented on the Presidio.
- In contrast to Pershing Square, the Post Nursery was a secluded site with a security fence and off limits to the public. The Post Nursery would be an unlikely spot for the DAR to plant a ceremonial dawn redwood tree.
- There is no evidence of a dawn redwood tree existing at Pershing Square after the 1956 newspaper account in The Star Presidian, about the time the dawn redwood appears to be planted in the Post Nursery.

Army Post to National Park

In 1959, the Army replaced the original 1915 Post Green House building P-214/T-1327 with a new wood and fiberglass greenhouse structure—building T-1381. The new 1,426 square foot greenhouse had a wood foundation, dirt floor, and glass-wire walls and roof (GGNRA Park Archive & Records Center, collection ADPWEMR-6 B3, 1 502-02 Demolition Bldg. 1381). The accompanying Army photographs show the wood-fiberglass greenhouse when described in the following quote from a 1985 Army inventory report (U.S. Army 1985):

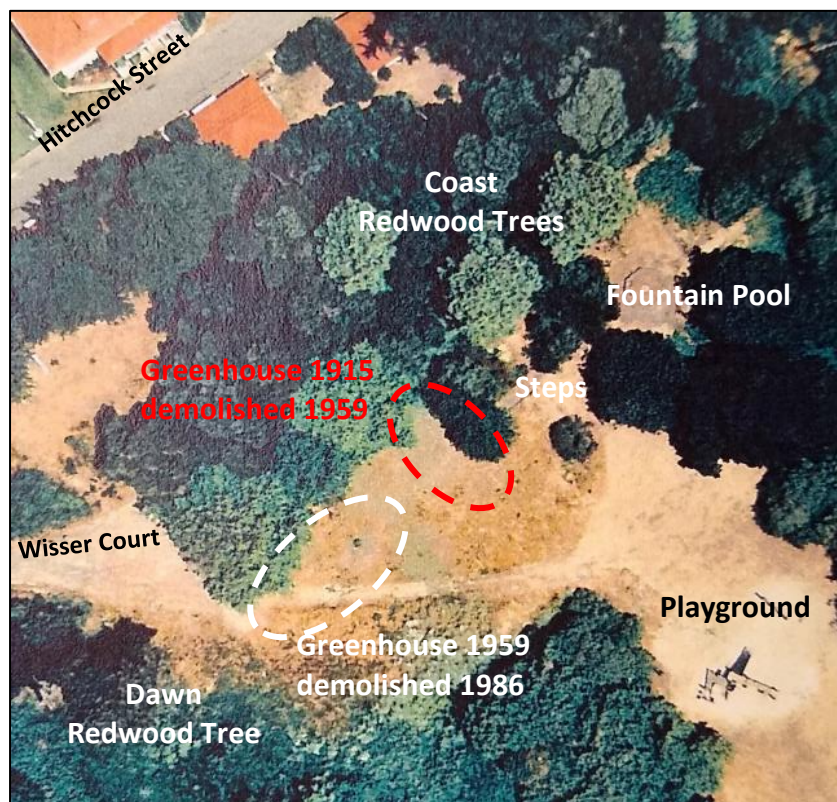
The building, a no longer utilized greenhouse, was erected in 1959 and is now functionally obsolete and no longer a necessary asset in the Presidio building inventory. The building is a Category IV structure which does not possess individual historic significance, nor does it contribute to historic character of the Presidio of San Francisco.

The official closure in 1985 of the Post Green House demonstrates the Army's final abandonment of the Fort Scott Post Nursery facility. The Army inspected the greenhouse structure in March 1986 finding no hazardous materials or asbestos-containing-material (ACM) in the structure. Later in 1986, the Army demolished the unused Post Green House Building T-1381, while listing it on an Army form as an "unauthorized sunroom." When the Army demolished the greenhouse, it removed the large debris and a large Sycamore-London Planetree, then graded the ground surface southward to make a flat area for a storage yard. Soil mixed with small fragments of concrete rubble, wood, broken glass, chert rock, and fiberglass shards, underlies the middle area of the present-day community garden. From 1986 to 1994, the Army may have used the site for a temporary storage yard. Gardeners do not use the fill soil that has debris for food cultivation. Vegetable growing only occurs in raised planting beds filled with imported organic topsoil, manure, and Presidio-derived green compost.



Army photographs from 1985 inventory report showing vacant wood and fiberglass Post Green House building T-1381 built in 1959. The Army demolished this building in 1986. Source: photographs by U.S. Army 1985 in GGNRA Park Archives & Records Center (PARC), duplicate photographs weeded by PARC in 2008 now in collection/courtesy of Barbara E. Corff.

Local community groups had worked for decades to create the transition from an Army post to a national park. On June 13, 1962, the local community had the Presidio named as a National Historic Landmark. On September 18, 1965, the California State Park Commission, the California History Commission, and the Army commemorated the Presidio as California Registered Historical Landmark No. 79. On October 15, 1966, local historians added the Presidio to the National Register of Historic Places. In 1970, the Commanding General of the 6th Army and the National Park Service (NPS or Park Service) agreed that the entire military reservation was within the Landmark boundary with the historic district having 662 contributing buildings from a period of historic significance of 1776 to 1945. As issued in 1972 legislation, the local community decided to transition the Presidio of San Francisco Army post to a new park unit of the GGNRA.



Closeup excerpt of aerial photograph dated 1989 showing overgrown Fort Scott Post Nursery after demolition of Post Green House in 1986 leaving the site as vacant land. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. North towards top of aerial photograph. Source: color copy of aerial photograph in "Aerials" binder, photographic collection, GGNRA Park Archives & Record Center.

As shown on the accompanying 1989 aerial photograph, the untended Post Nursery and Victory Garden had become overgrown with Acacia trees, invasive Ivy, bindweed, thistle, poison hemlock, Vinca, Himalayan blackberry, nasturtium, and grass. The aerial photograph shows no greenhouse or other structures and no discernible gardening activity or other use. By this time, the Army, its officer's families, and neighborhood residents had stopped tending the overgrown parterre rose garden's planting beds. Note that the Army built the two former greenhouse structures, building P-214/T-1327 built 1915 and demolished circa 1959, and building T-1381 built 1959 and demolished in 1986, on adjoining but separate building pads.

By 1988, national military leadership considered the Presidio post obsolete for modern warfare training. The Army's decreasing use of the Presidio post could be the reason for the abandonment of the Post Nursery, Post Green House, and parterre rose garden by 1985. In 1988, the U.S. congress recommended decommissioning 49 military installations nationwide including the Presidio of San Francisco post. In 1989, the NPS and GGNRA started preparations for the transition of the military post to a national park by 1994. The Defense Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1990 had created the framework for the transfer and disposal of military installations closed during the base realignment and closure (BRAC) process. As part of the military reduction program under BRAC, Congress voted to end the Presidio's 213-year tenure as an active military installation effective in 1994.

On October 1, 1994, the Presidio of San Francisco became a new unit of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and on June 23, 1995, the U.S. Sixth Army left the Presidio ending its 219-year history as a military reservation and starting a new mission as a national park.

The Sixth U.S. Army deactivated on June 23, 1995, and the Sixth Army Band with colors marched the army group out of the Presidio through the Lombard Gate. Source: GGNRA Park Archives and Records Center, Deactivation Photographs, GOGA photograph 2278.



Golden Gate NRA, Park Archives, Sixth Army Deactivation Photographs, GOGA-2278

The Presidio's housing was vacant and in need of repair when the Army left in 1994. "People have always been the soul of the Presidio," said Craig Middleton, former Presidio Trust Executive Director, "With the Army's departure in 1994, daily activity here dramatically declined. The buildings were vacant, the streets quiet, and the vitality diminished." Craig Middleton witnessed firsthand the difficult transition from a prestigious military reservation to a new national park.

Craig Middleton served as press secretary and legislative/appropriations aide to Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi in Washington prior to his involvement with the Presidio. Before the Presidio Trust, he was with the non-profit Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy where he worked with the blue-ribbon Presidio Council, a group established to provide expertise to assist with the Presidio's transition from an Army post to a national park site. He collaborated with Congresswoman Pelosi and her key aide, Judy Lemons, to develop an innovative concept that would ensure the Presidio's longevity as a public resource. Craig Middleton focused on the legislation that created the Presidio Trust to manage 80% of the park.

Craig Middleton became the new Presidio Trust's first employee in early 1997, becoming the deputy director of government affairs, programs, and administration. Later in 1997, real estate developer Jim Meadows became the first Executive Director for the new Presidio Trust. He was a brash former Air Force pilot and Dole Foods executive who oversaw the redevelopment of Denver's former Lowry Air Force base to civilian use in 1996 as an urban community with 25,000 residents.

Jim Meadow's hard-charging development style did not play well in San Francisco where the Presidio of San Francisco is a historic and cultural treasure. Community groups criticized Jim Meadows for not adhering to the Park Service's general management plan, which emphasized protection and enhancement of the Presidio's forests, meadows, and wetlands over property development. Under Jim Meadows, the Presidio Trust leased the former Army Letterman Hospital site to mogul George Lucas who demolished the structure and built a new sprawling cinema production facility on park land. Jim Meadows built a competent management team that the community criticized for poor cost accounting and hiring former development cronies.



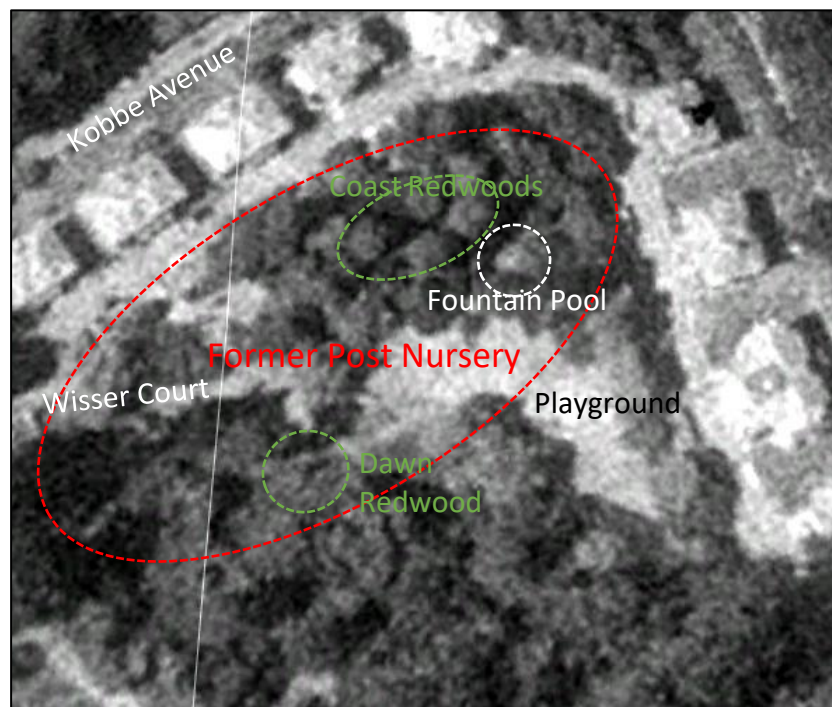
Craig Middleton shown in 2001 accepting position as Presidio Trust interim director. Image: Kathleen Sullivan, Chronicle Staff Writer, SFGATE, Dec. 13, 2001.

In 2001, the Presidio Trust's board of directors announced that Jim Meadows had resigned, and the board appointed Craig Middleton as interim Executive Director. Craig said that in the short term, he would emphasize restoration of natural resources over development. Craig Middleton served as Executive Director for 14 years until his retirement in 2015. Under Middleton's leadership the Presidio thrived, achieving the goal of financial self-sufficiency in 2013. Greg Moore of the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy was a key player in shaping the vision of the Presidio. Greg Moore and Craig Middleton worked as partners for 22 years at the Presidio. "It's impossible to imagine what the Presidio would be like without Craig's passion, political savvy, and steadfast commitment," said Greg Moore. "Craig's leadership has resulted in one of our nation's most important, beautiful, and well-cared for national parks in any major city. He has certainly delivered on his promise to Congress, the American public, the national park community, the Bay Area and the people of San Francisco." Sources: SFGATE newspaper articles dated Dec. 11, 2001, by Chronicle staff writer Glen Martin, Dec 13, 2001, article by Chronicle staff writer Kathleen Sullivan; Presidio Trust press release dated Feb. 24, 2015.

From 1989 to 1992, historic landscape architects for the NPS and GGNRA used historical accounts, maps, and aerial photographs, along with ground surveys to define the historical cultural landscape features of the Presidio and Fort Winfield Scott. In an email interview with Barbara Corff, Patricia "Peetz" Brouillette, Historic Landscape Architect for the NPS, recalls analyzing aerial photographs at the GGNRA Park Archives and Records Center when she found the overgrown and forgotten parterre garden in 1990-1991 (P. Brouillette, personal communication, February 2022):

I saw mysterious shapes in a small plot of land in the Fort Scott residential area next to the playground. Nick Weeks, park landscape architect and I were delighted and super curious to investigate and ran up, thrilled to discover remnants of an abandoned, thickly overgrown formal garden area, including stone walls, paths, and a parterre (with fountain?!) and amazed to see a sole Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) in the southeast(?) corner of the site. Our "Quintex" historical project review team checked it out, and NPS archeologist Leo Barker set about to further research the site to conduct a survey. The last time I saw it, the area was being divided into transects.

The Park Service in its 1992 Presidio Cultural Landscape Analysis includes a description of the former garden as follows, "On a gently sloping terrace found below the well-maintained grounds of the general's quarters on Wright Loop is the remnants of a garden. The area consists of paths, walks, decorative exotic plantings, fencing,



fountain or basin, steps, and gate." In 1992, the Park Service recommended the preservation of the historical landscape features in the "Kobbe Community Garden" area (National Park Service 1992). The accompanying aerial photograph dated 1993 shows the overgrown former Post Nursery area.

Closeup excerpt from aerial photograph dated 1993 showing overgrown Post Nursery and parterre rose garden, now called World War II Victory Garden in the 1990s. In 1993, there is no sign of gardening, maintenance, or storage activities. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. Source: Google Earth Pro 2022, Image U.S. Geological Survey, Landsat / Copernicus.

Natural Resource Restoration

In the fall of 1993, the GGNRA's Terri Thomas (then Chief of Natural Resources Management and Science), Sharon Farrell (then Natural Resource Specialist and Planner), and Greg Moore (Golden Gate National Parks Association) started the Presidio Park Stewardship Program. Peter Holloran, California Native Plant Society, described the program at the Presidio in his 1996 article (P. Holloran 1996):

Over the last decade, GGNRA superintendent Brian O'Neill and his staff, particularly natural resources division chief Terri Thomas, have developed a variety of programs that involve the public in every aspect of resource stewardship, from raptor research and wildlife monitoring to trail maintenance and museum curating. "There is a growing recognition," O'Neill acknowledges, "that the future of this park lies in its ability to mobilize the community to feel personal responsibility as stewards of the public trust.

Terri Thomas recalls that the five years from 1994 to 1999 was a special and exciting time on the Presidio for natural resource restoration (T. Thomas, personal communication 2022). In his 1996 article, Peter Holloran summarized the start of the stewardship conservation efforts:

In December 1993, after strong lobbying by the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), GGNRA hired Sharon Farrell to coordinate restoration of rare-plant habitat on the Presidio using a crew from the San Francisco Conservation Corps (SFCC). The five-year \$300,000 program is supported by funds from the Department of Defense's base-closure budget. Recognizing that an eight-member crew could hardly manage the Presidio's natural areas on its own, Farrell established a weekly work party to provide opportunities for CNPS members and others to participate in rare-plant stewardship. Having worked on native-plant restoration for the GGNRA both as a volunteer and as a contractor, Farrell recognized the importance of involving the community in stewardship of natural areas. Volunteer participation and community-based stewardship are now hallmarks of the Presidio Stewardship Program.

In his 1996 article, Peter Holloran also described the 1990s movement for community gardening:

The community-gardening movement, for example, has experienced a tremendous boom during the last decade, in part because of its emphasis on providing food and jobs for people in disadvantaged communities. The San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners helps maintain the city's 100 community gardens, with young workers and supervisors drawn from the city's disenfranchised communities. Its headquarters, infrastructure projects, and large-scale agricultural initiatives are all situated in the communities where its employees live.

Marc Albert, then Supervisory Ecologist for the GGNRA, recalls the 1993-1994 start of the stewardship program in his 2002 article (M. Albert 2002):

The Presidio Park Stewards began linking the community's hands to the sandy and serpentine soils of the Presidio in the fall of 1993. Starting with just a few volunteers from the Native Plant Society, the program brought together local youth, visitors, and corporations at Lobos Creek Dunes, then at the Inspiration Point grassland, Baker Beach, the Coastal Bluffs, and now at Crissy Field, Mountain Lake, 'Quail Commons', and other natural areas. Today, hundreds of stewards participate in the natural history of the Presidio each month. Few places in the nation have attracted such broad community support for restoring natural resources. The team of staff, interns, students, AmeriCorps members, corporate groups, and a shifting core of dedicated drop-in volunteers agree that their experiences are transformative, not only in re-awakening the Presidio's landscape but enriching their own lives.

The Park Service's July 1994 *Final General Management Plan Amendment* for the Presidio welcomed a vibrant community of ecologists working to produce environmental benefits from the park's dormant natural areas. The Park Service encouraged environmental activists, community volunteers, and partner organizations to engage in enhancing the park's diverse landscapes and resources.

The Natural Resources Park Stewards (or Presidio Park Stewards) newsletter titled the Volunteer Voice (later the Presidio Volunteer Voice) started in March 1995. Natural Resource Park Stewards edited and distributed the Volunteer Voice every other month to more than 500 individuals, organizations, and volunteer centers. The extensive newsletter outreach resulted in community citizens donating thousands of volunteer hours to natural resource conservation efforts at the Presidio (M. Albert 2002).



Heading of Presidio Volunteer Voice dated Oct-Nov 2000, Issue 36. Image courtesy Presidio Trust.

The following quote is from ecologist and naturalist Josiah Clark (J. Clark 1999):

When the Presidio, a former military base, was handed over to the National Park Service in 1994, habitat restoration began breathing life back into rare, native San Franciscan habitats long neglected. Riparian, dune, Serpentine scrub, and grassland habitats were nurtured and expanded. Funds for habitat restoration were scant at first, but plant lists decades old were resurrected, rare and relict plant populations were pinpointed beneath the plethora of exotic grasses, and local seeds with their local genes were collected. A few encroaching eucalyptus trees, originally planted to serve as an Army wood source, finally met their long-awaited fate when their trunks yielded the structural supports for green shade-houses, where hundreds of native plants were propagated and cared for. A few park staff, local experts, college graduates, and volunteers organized to create a field office and nursery in an abandoned Army building. Regular volunteer programs brought neighbors, schools, plant buffs, and whoever would contribute their hands to help with field restoration. The Presidio Park Stewards was born: a community commitment to care for dozens of extant jewels, native habitats and organisms persisting in an urban setting.

In 1993-1994, the Park Service started the Native Plant Nursery (now called Presidio Nursery) in Dragonfly Creek near to the community garden site. Colette Todorov (Hunter), then Native Plant Nursery Manager for the GGNPA, describes the program in her article (C. Todorov (Hunter) 2002):

The first San Francisco Conservation Corp nursery specialist started in June 1995. The Native Plant Nursery collects seeds, cuttings, and bulbs from over 200 native plant species in the Presidio and propagates tens of thousands of native plants to be planted in base closure environmental restoration projects across the Presidio. The nursery first supplied plants for the restoration project in the Lobos Creek Valley, where hundreds of volunteers removed asphalt, rubble, and non-native weeds and planted 65,000 native plants in restored dunes.

With the Park Stewards program and Native Plant Nursery started, the Park Service and its partner the Golden Gate National Parks Association (after 2003 called the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy) was ready in 1994 to tackle a restoration project proposed in the Presidio's General Management Plan Amendment to enhance the natural beauty of the new national park. Lobos Creek supplies the water for the community garden. On its website, the Parks Conservancy describes the Lobos Creek Valley natural restoration project (Source: Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy website at <https://www.parksconservancy.org/projects/lobos-creek/>):

Just 200 years ago, Lobos Creek Valley was part of a vast system of sand dunes covering one-third of San Francisco. Lobos Creek, fueled by rains and gathering water from the Richmond District, provided water for early inhabitants of the city. This valley was the first major natural restoration project undertaken after the Presidio became a national park in 1994; the restored ecosystem now features rolling dunes covered with native plants, including the threatened San Francisco Lessingia. A habitat for many animals, the valley offers a rare glimpse of San Francisco before its urbanization. The creek itself still runs year-round, providing most of the water used by Presidio residents, tenants, and employees.

From 1995 to 1996, the Park Service and volunteers cleared thirteen acres in the Lobos Creek Valley of asphalt and rubble and restored the area to a native coastal scrub habitat. The Park Service constructed permanent dunes using a gravel base and local sand, then volunteers' hand-planted over 65,000 nursery grown native plants. Now the restored dunes are home to 133 plant species as well as species of butterflies and birds. Today, a half-mile boardwalk off Lincoln Boulevard guides visitors through the valley and protects delicate vegetation (G. Todd 2010).



View west of Lobos Creek Valley restoration project, the first major restoration project in the new national park in 1994. Community volunteers, Park Service staff, Park Stewards, and Native Plant Nursery stewards worked from 1995 to 1996 to design, build, grow, plant, and nurture the diverse native coastal scrub dune habitat seen in the photograph.

The GGNRA's July 1994 *Presidio Management Plan Amendment* included a commitment to restore garden areas in Fort Winfield Scott. Page 22 states "Overgrown garden areas would be restored, and historic landscape features (roads, paths, walls) would be preserved." In discussing Fort Winfield Scott on page 62, the plan says, "Historic views would be re-established, gardens restored, and historic landscape features preserved." Also, on page 161 of the 1994 plan it says, "In addition, remnant historic gardens and landscaped areas would be rehabilitated throughout the planning area." (National Park Service 1994). In 2022 phone interviews with Barbara Corff, Terri Thomas, former Chief of Natural Resources Management and Science, and Colette Todorov (Hunter), then Native Plant Nursery Manager for the GGNPA, do not recall GGNRA staff or park stewards as active in starting the community garden during 1994 to 1997.

Beginning in 1994, park service staff and park stewards were busy on the complex Lobos Creek Valley restoration project. Also, planning efforts had started on other restoration projects related to the park's environmental cleanup including Crissy Field, Mountain Lake, and landfill removals at the Coastal Bluffs and Tennessee Hollow Watershed. In a phone interview with Barbara Corff, Colette Todorov (Hunter), former manager of the Presidio Nursery, remembered Marcia Smith-White coming by the native plant nursery for advice on organic gardening and to borrow hand tools for a new community garden (Colette Todorov (Hunter), personal communication, 2022). Terri Thomas recalled in her interview that a Presidio neighborhood mayor and community activist named Marcia Smith-White may be the person most responsible for mobilizing the rehabilitation of a former World War II Victory Garden into a new community garden in 1996 (C. Todorov and T. Thomas, personal communication, 2022).

Pioneer Community Gardeners

Presidio tenants and park partners started in 1995 to reinstate community gardening in the new Presidio of San Francisco national park, as part of a larger sustainability movement. An affiliated group informally known as the Sustainable Presidio Alliance sought to create sustainable policies in the new Presidio park. The July 1994 Final General Management Plan Amendment / Environmental Impact Statement for the Presidio, called for the Presidio to become a model of environmental protection and sustainable design (National Park Service 1994):

Public and private organizations would join with the Park Service in demonstrating technologies and practices that reduce environmental impacts or produce environmental benefits in energy conservation, solid waste management, transportation, water conservation and reclamation, and sewage treatment.

After the Army left in 1994, Executive Director of the Fort Mason Center, Marc Kasky and his wife became the first Presidio residents. As Kasky remembers it, the Presidio was a wilder, quieter place. "It was just like living in the country for the first several years," Kasky recalls. Coyotes, skunks, raccoons, and blue herons were their only neighbors. "Occasionally, the streetlights would not work at night, and that was fabulous-to walk outside in San Francisco and be in the dark!" (Presidio Trust website www.presidio.gov/presidio-trust/press/first-presidio-residents-celebrate-18-years-in-the-park, Dec. 3, 2013).

In an interview by Barbara Corff, Laura Keresty, former Executive Director of the Presidio Alliance for Sustainability (Presidio Alliance) from 1995 to 1998, recalled that the Presidio Alliance was born as a non-profit advisory group with a mission to foster communication and cooperation between stakeholders active in sustainability-related activities on the Presidio. The National Park Service's 1995 Green Conference brought the Presidio's sustainability visionaries together. The Presidio Alliance became a project of the Tides Foundation in the Presidio's Thoreau Center for Sustainability. Philanthropist Henry Dakin of the Dakin Toy Company family, who lived in nearby Pacific Heights, incubated the establishment of the startup, and supplied funds for an Executive Director. In 1979, Henry and his wife Vergilia had funded the San Francisco Waldorf School in Pacific Heights, which later held urban gardening classes in the community garden.

The Presidio Alliance for Sustainability emphasized the value of non-profits working for the environment and sustainability, as valuable resources for the Presidio community. Members advocated for the incoming Presidio Trust to adopt sustainability-minded values, tenants, and programming for the new park. In an agreement with the Tides Foundation, the Park Service supplied a former 1903 barracks building in the East Cantonment area where Buffalo Soldiers may have lived. Building 563 became the office of the Presidio Alliance from 1995 through 1998. Laura Keresty became the first Executive Director in 1995. Donations from Henry Dakin, board members, and small grants supplied the operating funds.

In an interview with Barbara Corff, Joanne Winship recalled that in 1995, Marc Kasky invited her to join the Presidio Alliance and she served as the board of directors' chair from 1995 to 1998. The board included members from organizations such as the Park Service, U.S. EPA, Tides Foundation, Fort Mason Center, Coastal Commission, with Grove Consulting performing meeting facilitation. Joanne Winship recalls Marcia Smith-White as a board member from the Presidio Mayors Council (J. Winship, personal communication 2022). The Presidio Alliance supplied a forum for community meetings, seminars, conferences, and art exhibits. The Presidio Alliance published an informative resource called the Presidio Directory under the able direction of Henry Dakin. The directory brought together all the Presidio's varied sustainable and green resources in one useful compendium.



Marc Kasky and his wife Cat Carr were the first residents to live in the Presidio of San Francisco when it became a park in 1994. Image: Douglas Zimmerman/ SFGATE.

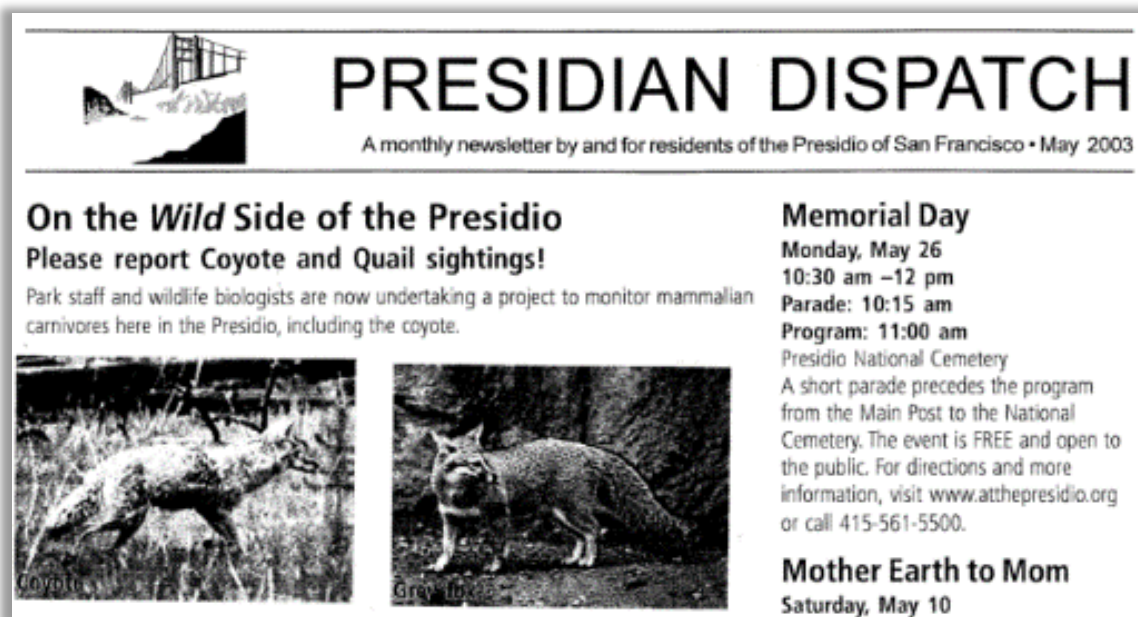
After the Presidio Trust assumed park management in 1998, the first Presidio Trust's Executive Director, real estate developer Jim Meadows from Denver, brought a development-oriented philosophy to the Presidio. Marc Kasky recalls that Mr. Meadows said the Presidio Trust was not interested in partnering with the Fort Mason Center or other non-profits working to rehabilitate buildings on the Presidio. The Presidio Alliance lost relevancy in the Trust's new profit-oriented development mission. Laura Keresty recalls that issues with the group's own mission statement and low fund raising added to the problems of the Presidio Alliance. When overdue maintenance costs surfaced in 1998, the Presidio Alliance lost its lease on building 563. The Presidio Trust remodeled the building as an "elegantly nostalgic" restaurant-bar called the Presidio Social Club that opened in 2006 and still serves the Presidio community today (Source: Presidio Trust website).

Marcia Smith-White, a Presidio resident and mother of three, moved into the 4-bedroom residence at 1302 Kobbe Avenue in the summer of 1995. Marcia's home was a short walk from the former World War II Victory Garden. Her husband Rick Smith was a dentist at the Army post. In 1996, Marcia was a Neighborhood Mayor who advocated for a vibrant resident community in the new park. The Neighborhood Mayors was an Army program that stayed active after the Sixth Army left the Presidio in 1995. The former Army residential neighborhoods had a reputation as close-knit communities where residents knew their neighbors well.

In 1998, the Presidio Trust referred to the group as the Residential Mayors Program or Neighborhood Mayors Program. A 1998 Presidio Post article summarized the program as follows (Presidio Post 1998):

The Neighborhood Mayor's Program is a group of Presidio residents who volunteer their time to support their individual neighborhoods (currently 20) at the Presidio. The objectives of the program are three-fold: First, to create a channel for communication between Presidio residents and Presidio management – the best-known example is their personal distribution of flyers and newsletters twice a month; second, to create an atmosphere of mutual concern and cooperation, and a feeling of togetherness or "community;" and third, to generate interest and pride in living on the Presidio. The goal of the mayor's program is to improve the quality of life for all Presidio residents through effective communication.

Marcia Smith-White and the Presidio Mayors Council (later the Presidio Residents Council) published a monthly or bimonthly newsletter called the Community Dispatch, later the Presidian Dispatch, for Presidio residents with current news on community events and programs (Presidio Post 1998).



First page of Presidian Dispatch newsletter dated May 2003. Originally Marcia Smith-White called the newsletter Community Dispatch in the 1990s. Image courtesy of Presidio Trust.

The following quote is from The Presidio Post in the Volunteer News section titled Volunteer of the Month: Marcia Smith-White (Presidio Post 1998):

Our good fortune is that during the summer of 1995, Marcia arrived at the Presidio and soon became involved in community activities including coordination of the Residential Mayor Program, creation of the Community Garden, active membership in the Presidio Alliance, chair of the Community Activities Team, and author of the residential newsletter, Community Dispatch. Her innate desire to be involved is a classic example of what is meant by the phrase 'giving back to one's community.' Marcia has also been a constant proponent and 'teacher by example' about what a special place the Presidio is and what it means to 'live' the concept of sustainability and has done much to promote sustainability to those who live at the Presidio. We gratefully acknowledge Marcia Smith-White's efforts in support of the Presidio Community. Marcia, you have made a difference – thank you!!

In a 2022 interview by Barbara Corff, Laura Keresty, Executive Director of the Presidio Alliance for Sustainability (Presidio Alliance) from 1995 to 1998, recalled that in 1995-1996, Marcia Smith-White was the chair of the Presidio Mayor's Council, and she became a board member at the Presidio Alliance.

In 1997, Marcia Smith-White became the Presidio Residential Mayors Program Coordinator for the Presidio Trust with an office in Main Post building 34. Laura Keresty recalled that Marcia had a practical approach to creating a vibrant resident community (L. Keresty, personal communication 2022). The following quote is from the Presidian Dispatch where Marcia Smith-White describes her coordinator role as follows (Presidio Dispatch 2003):

Which means I work with the people who live here in the park. It is a quite conglomerate group of people. We have over 289 military families. We have over 62 park employee families. And we have a growing number – the last number I think was 92 partner units. So, this is a wild and wooly group of people who have different needs and different interests of what is going on.” Source: excerpt from statement of Marcia Smith-White, April 27, 1998, Presidio Trust Board Meeting and The Golden Gate National Recreation Area Advisory Commission.

In his text message to Barbara Corff in August 2022, Marc Kasky, former Executive Director of the Fort Mason Center, the first Presidio tenant in 1995 and an original member of the Presidio Alliance, recalls how he viewed community gardens and why he supported rehabilitating the overgrown World War II Victory Garden at Fort Winfield Scott as a community garden (Marc Kasky, personal communication 2022):

In the 1970s, I became aware of a famous community garden in upper Fort Mason which had been gardened by Marina neighbors for many years. It was beautifully maintained, and a pleasure to visit. Because it was so successful and valued, there was a years-long waiting list to obtain a plot as one opened only when someone moved (rare), failed to maintain their plot (never), or passed on.

A few years later I was fortunate to obtain a 10' x10' plot in my neighborhood community garden at the corner of Jones and Greenwich Streets in North Beach. It was a joy to work on, and I got to meet neighbors I had seen but not connected with. Soon after my wife and I moved into the Presidio in 1995, we became aware that residents from the nearby neighborhood were interested in reactivating the Victory Garden in Fort Scott.

Thru all this, I came to appreciate the value of community gardens as a place where people of different backgrounds, ages, interests, politics, and socioeconomic levels could work on their own little plot, as part of a larger effort to create something beautiful that enhanced their lives and the lives of others. This was done in harmony with and responsibility to others. And they would regularly come face-to-face with each other. This, to me, is true community.

In a 2022 phone interview with Barbara Corff, former resident Marcia Smith-White recalled that sustainability-minded residents started rehabilitation of the overgrown World War II Victory Garden in 1996 with the aid of Park Service staff (M. Smith-White, personal communication, 2022). Marcia Smith-White, Cristina Prokop, and Ranger Bob (Robert Chandler) started the first community garden plots in 1996-1997. Joanne Winship and Damian Raffa, pioneer community gardeners, recalled the Garden's beginning in emails to Barbara Corff dated February 2022. They remembered that in 1996-1997, a half-dozen or so Presidio residents, sustainability-minded Presidio Alliance members, and Park Service staff started rehabilitating the overgrown World War II Victory Garden as a volunteer effort with no formal plan or organization (D. Raffa & J. Winship, personal communication 2022).

Marcia Smith-White was the facilitator who brought various Presidio Park Partners together to rehabilitate the World War II Victory Garden. Through her community involvement, she had contacts with the Park Service, Presidio Trust, Presidio Alliance for Sustainability, Neighborhood Mayors Council, Restoration Advisory Board, Presidio Nursery, and neighborhood residents. Within the Presidio Alliance for Sustainability, she knew Henry Dakin and the San Francisco Waldorf School, who would teach gardening classes in the new garden. In 1996, she was determined to create a community garden and she recruited park staff, residents, sustainability-minded park partners, volunteer ecologists, and Waldorf School families to become the first pioneer gardeners.

In a 2022 interview with Barbara Corff, Cristina Prokop, who grew up in San Francisco and whose husband worked for the NPS, recalls the early days of the Garden. Cristina was a neighbor and friend of Marcia Smith-White. She remembers breaking ground for her garden plot circa 1997. She recalls the exotic plants in a separate "mystery garden" planted by "military wives" (Cristina Prokop, personal communication 2022).

In a 2022 interview with Barbara Corff, Lisa Hillstrom, who worked from 1997 to 2000 for both the NPS as an Interpretive Ranger and Park Partner Liaison, recalled the first Presidio General Manager Bob Chandler as the "Ranger Bob" who aided Marcia Smith-White in starting the community garden in 1996 (Lisa Hillstrom, personal communication 2022).

During his 38-year career with NPS, Robert S. "Bob" Chandler received the NPS's highest awards, Meritorious Service and Distinguished Service. He began his NPS career as a horticulturist with National Capital Parks. He served as superintendent of national parks including Grand Canyon National Park. His final NPS position was 3½ years as the first General Manager of the Presidio Project Office from 1993 to 1996.

Because of the unique difficulties in creating a new national park from an old Army post, the NPS Washington office brought in its best trouble shooter to manage the Presidio Project Office. Bob Chandler and his wife were the first civilians to move onto the old Army post and lived amidst the Army culture in 1993. His office was the first nonmilitary entity to open on the Army post in 1993 and the office became the conduit for park management. His Presidio Project Office completed the 1994 General Management Plan Amendment (GMPA), oversaw the transition from the Army in 1994-1995, and started leasing properties on the Presidio in 1996 (Rothman 2002). Bob Chandler retired when he left the Presidio in 1996 and passed away at age 74 in 2010.



Cristina Prokop's daughter watering their community garden plot circa 1997. View towards northeast with Kobbe Officer Quarters residences in background across Hitchcock Street service road. Image: photograph from personal collection of Cristina Prokop.

At his memorial tribute in 2011, former NPS Deputy Director Dennis Galvin described Bob Chandler (shown in photo to right) in his letter (Source: Bob Chandler Tribute website 2022 at www.bobchandlertribute.blogspot.com):

I used to call him "Cool Hand Luke." You could send him into the center of the most heated controversies and the volume would go down, the phone calls to Washington would stop, and solutions would be found. Bob would have people talking to each other. And when he left the phone calls would resume, complaining that Bob was leaving.

In 1996-1997, Presidio General Manager Bob Chandler, a horticulturist himself, along with other park staff, supported rehabilitating the World War II Victory Garden. The 1994 NPS General Management Plan Amendment (GMPA) did not include a plan for the Victory Garden restoration. In 1996-1997, the NPS did not supply funds for garden rehabilitation. Bob Chandler gave permission to the neighborhood mayors to start a community garden and supplied what staff support he could.

In her 2022 interview with Barbara Corff, Marcia Smith-White said the neighborhood mayors petitioned the Presidio Trust in 1997 to rehabilitate the World War II Victory Garden as a community garden for park residents, staff, and volunteers. Craig Middleton, the Presidio Trust's first employee in 1997, recalled that the Presidio Trust supported the community garden from the very beginning (2022 phone interview with Barbara Corff). As director in charge of the budget, he recalled the Presidio Trust supplied funds for landscape crews to clear the site, exposing historical rock walls and paths. Craig described the garden as a special "place to discover."

At the first Presidio Trust's Board of Directors meeting on July 9, 1997, Marcia Smith-White gave an official statement as the Coordinator of the Residential Mayors Program, which she said consisted of 24 mayors standing for 350 families living on the Presidio. She impressed the new board with a gift basket of fresh vegetables from the new community garden (Presidio Trust, 1997):

When I was looking for an appropriate gift to welcome you here, I could not help but think of something that the park and the community, the mayors, have all done together. We have a community garden here that has been designated historically correct. There had been a garden there before. And we have a wonderful bounty that I would like to share with you. Just last night we pulled scallions and beets. (A basket was presented to the board.) We have potatoes and tomatoes." "On behalf of the Presidio Alliance who helps us a lot with our concepts of sustainability, you must know the baskets are not recyclable, but they are reusable.

Marcia Smith-White emphasized that the community garden was "designated historically correct." She was referring to the 1992 NPS cultural landscape analysis that showed a historical community garden and Victory Garden. In 1989-1991, NPS historic landscape architects used aerial photographs from the 1930s to 1950s to outline the historical Post Nursery and garden. The resulting 1992 NPS Cultural Landscape Analysis described the community garden and recommended preservation of the historical landscape features in the "Kobbe Community Garden" area (National Park Service 1992). In 1986, the Army had demolished all Post Nursery, Post Green House, and sheds, and the vacant garden site was untended and overgrown. Neighboring residents called the ghostly shapes and exotic plants near their homes the "mystery garden." In 1996, an informal group of residents, park staff, and volunteers started rehabilitating the former community garden, now nicknamed the World War II Victory Garden, and the Presidio Trust formally recognized the community garden in 1998.



Robert S. "Bob" Chandler, General Manager, Presidio Project Office, 1993-1996. Image: The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks.

The pioneer gardeners situated the first community garden plots within the area of the former World War II Victory Garden as seen in a 1948 aerial photograph. Marcia Smith-White recalled that "the first gardeners chose a grassy area for the community garden planting beds within the footprint of the historic garden." The gardeners cleared plots for 5-foot wide by 10-foot-long planting beds in a gently sloping area of sandy soil along the southern margin and former Army perimeter security fence. Joanne Winship recalls that Marcia Smith-White invited her in early 1997 to join a handful of pioneer gardeners. Joanne recalls there was no formal layout, no raised beds, no tools, no shed, no restroom, no tables, and no onsite water. The enthusiastic new gardeners staked out claims and broke ground by hand with borrowed tools and their own resources. Joanne remembers that pioneer gardener Damian Raffa, a park employee who at the time was the Baker Beach neighborhood mayor, became the first Park Service liaison and later Presidio Trust liaison to the new community garden.



View looking west at in-ground community garden plots in 1999. Polynesian wood sculptor Tonu Shane's sculpture bench is visible in front of the Dawn Redwood tree trunk. In 2005, Mark Youngkin found the sculpture bench disassembled and stored underneath a pile of scrap wood. Mark Youngkin reassembled the bench in 2005 for gardeners to enjoy. Image from 1999 courtesy Presidio Trust 2022, photograph by Brenda Tharp.

View looking south at in-ground community garden planting beds in fall of 2002 showing flowers growing in and between plots. At this time, the garden plots were irregular sizes with indistinct boundaries marked by logs and stones. Image from 2002 courtesy Presidio Trust 2022.



View looking south at community garden in winter of 2002. The photograph shows compost piles in the foreground and planting beds beyond. The photograph shows a remnant of the Army's 1956 security fence behind the garden plots with the tall trees of the Presidio Forest in the background. Image from 2002 courtesy Presidio Trust 2022.

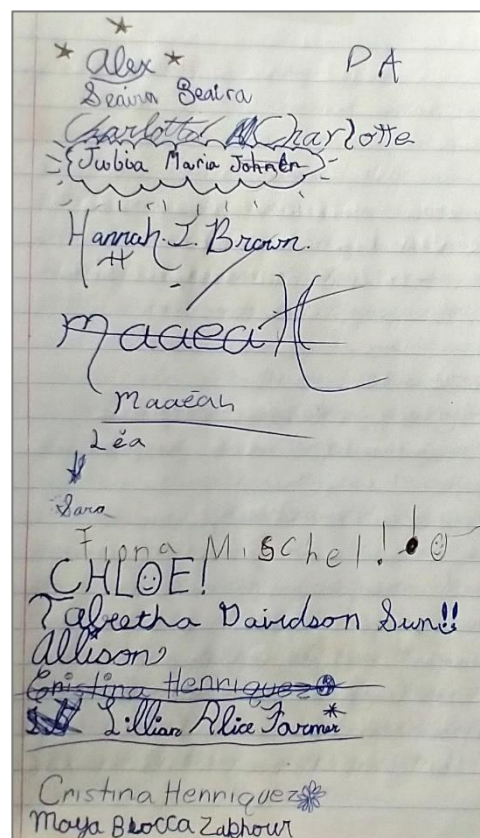
The first gardeners founded the community garden with a guiding philosophy of sustainability and named it the *Fort Scott Organic Community Garden* to ensure that sustainable organic agriculture was associated with the garden. The gardeners intended the community garden to be considerate of its environmental impact on the surrounding area, the wider community, and the water of nearby Dragonfly Creek. In 1996, the first community gardeners, including Marcia Smith-White and Cristina Prokop, dug plots into the existing ground surface and amended the soil by adding topsoil and manure. Today, gardeners continue organic gardening by not using toxic substances, chemical fertilizer, pesticides, or herbicides. A "do not plant" list prohibits planting invasive plants to protect and preserve the surrounding park.

In early 1997, the community garden pioneers installed a new water line to the garden's southern boundary. Marcia Smith-White recalls that from her residence window at 1302 Kobbe Avenue, she saw a Park Service crew with a "bulldozer" working in the wooded area south of the garden's boundary. Here a main water line extends from the water reservoir at the top of the hill and carries treated water from the Lobos Creek Treatment Plant to the Fort Winfield Scott campus. With permission and help from the Presidio Trust, the gardeners hurried to install a water pipe in an open trench and connect the new water line to a faucet in the new community garden. Early gardeners Joanne Winship and Jean Koch recalled digging for the new water line.



Barbara Corff at her garden plot as viewed in 2005.

In 1996, the first gardeners used one of the nearby vacant auto garages (building 1325) to store garden tools until volunteers could build a tool shed. Presidio families, who lived near the garden, had grade school children attending the San Francisco Waldorf School in nearby Presidio Heights. Henry Dakin was a founder and board member of the Presidio Alliance for Sustainability in 1995-1998. He founded the Waldorf School at Fort Mason Center in 1979. Chuck Beadie from the Waldorf School was an early gardener. Waldorf School families and community volunteers built the Gardener's Shed in the summer 1997. Early gardener Damian Raffa with a child at the Waldorf School, recalled that the tool shed was a donation by the San Francisco Waldorf School to aid the school's urban gardening program recently started in the new garden. According to Damian Raffa, the Waldorf School brought children to the community garden to learn organic gardening in two designated Waldorf School garden plots.



Signatures of 3rd grade Waldorf School students in June 2002, who pulled weeds, harvested peas, found roly poly bugs and butterflies, planted squash and pumpkins, and spread woodchips on paths.

Later the San Francisco Waldorf School moved its urban garden program to St. Anne's Home (Little Sisters of the Poor) on Lake Street outside the Presidio (Damian Raffa, personal communication 2022). With the aid and advice of park staff, new water service, and a new tool shed, the rehabilitation of the overgrown Victory Garden into a new community garden made substantial progress in 1997.



In 1997, volunteer community gardeners built the first building in the new Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden as a tool shed called the Gardener's Shed. The building was a donation from the San Francisco Waldorf School in nearby Pacific Heights. The school's urban garden program was active in two plots at the community garden in the mid-1990s to early 2000s. Image: 2010 courtesy of Barbara Corff.



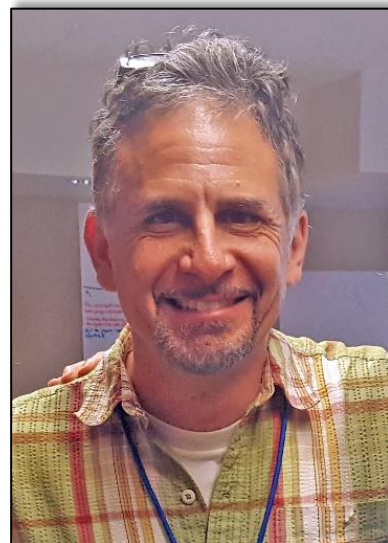
Closeup excerpt from June 2001 aerial photograph showing the first garden plots in the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden started in 1996 (white circle). Gardeners placed the first plots within the historical World War II Victory Garden area. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. White line is an artifact of longitude grid lines. Source: Google Earth Pro 2022, Image: from Maxar Technologies, Landsat / Copernicus.

When the Victory Garden rehabilitation began in 1996-1997, the gardeners mostly lived, worked, or volunteered at the Presidio. Marcia Smith-White, the first community gardener, was a Presidio resident and mother of three, who beginning in the summer of 1995, lived at nearby 1302 Kobbe Avenue, a short walk from the community garden site. In 1996, Marcia was a Neighborhood Mayor who advocated for a resident community in the new park and a community garden for the new community of residents, park staff, and volunteers.

Cristina Prokop was a nearby Kobbe Avenue resident and mother whose husband Stephen Prokop worked for the Park Service as a Law Enforcement Ranger and lifeguard from 1978 to 2001. Stephen Prokop received a 1995 NPS Distinguished Service Award for saving a life at Ocean Beach on Christmas day December 25, 1992 (Source: NPS Newsletter, Employees & Alumni Association, Vol. 2 No. 1 1995). In 1996, Cristina Prokop helped Marcia Smith-White, and Ranger Bob (Bob Chandler) start the rehabilitation of the community garden.

Stephen Prokop became a supervisory park ranger and later Deputy Chief Ranger. From 2001 to 2004, he was Chief Ranger at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area in northern California. Stephen Prokop became chief ranger at Cape Cod National Seashore and in 2008, superintendent of the Kalupapa National Historic Park in Hawaii (Source: Arrowhead, Newsletter of the NPS Employees & Alumni Association, Vol. 15 No. 2 Spring 2008). In 2013, the NPS selected him as superintendent at Redwood National and State Parks in Crescent City.

Damien Raffa was the Baker Beach neighborhood mayor in 1996 when the Garden rehabilitation started, and his daughter attended the San Francisco Waldorf School in nearby Pacific Heights. He became the garden liaison for the Park Service in 1997 and later for the Presidio Trust. For the past 25 years, Damien has designed and implemented projects and programs to provide urban children, youth and families engaging experiences and encounters with "nature in the city." Damien Raffa is now Senior Park Experience & Partnerships Specialist, Community Partnerships, for the Presidio Trust at the Presidio of San Francisco.



Damien Raffa
Image provided by
Damien Raffa.

Jan Blum was a Habitat Restoration Volunteer with the National Park Service and Presidio Trust from April 1997 through 2008. At the Presidio Native Plant Nursery, she learned gardening and plant propagation skills. She energetically tended plants in the entire garden and beautified it with sculptures since 2000. On the Presidio, and in San Francisco, her environmental and civic work was extensive. Jan advised, advocated, mentored, and collaborated for the preservation, restoration, interpretation, and sustainability of the Presidio. Before her passing, Jan championed the newest City Park and planted a native California Buckeye in the garden.

Joanne Winship was a pioneer gardener in 1996. A licensed architect, she worked for the City of San Francisco as the Director of Cultural Affairs. Marcia Smith-White introduced her to the Garden through her affiliation with Presidio residents and as chair of the board of directors for the Presidio Alliance for Sustainability. Joanne was a member of the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) from 1995 through 2000 and introduced other gardeners to the citizens advisory board on the cleanup of the Army's toxic waste from the Presidio.



Michael Chasse with family gardening at the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden circa 2007.
Images: photographs courtesy of Michael Chasse 2023.

Michael Chassé was an early gardener, with his wife Noël and their two children. He has been a biologist in the Golden Gate National Parks for over 20 years. He collaborates with the Park Conservancy and Presidio Trust on the protection and restoration of natural resources in the Presidio and beyond through volunteer-based activities. He leads the San Francisco Habitat Stewards weekly volunteer program and coordinates the ongoing monitoring of rare and endangered plants throughout the Golden Gate National Parks. Michael holds a Master's in Geography degree from San Francisco State University and is a veteran of the U.S. Peace Corps, having served with the first group of volunteers sent to the newly democratized Republic of Mongolia.

Barbara Corff followed an architecture career with an interest in the new national park forming just blocks from her home. A stewardship opportunity in native plant surveys at Lobos Creek dunes led to training with the National Park Service as an interpretive docent, developing tours of the Tennessee Hollow Watershed. She served park agencies as a natural and cultural resources consultant on a multitude of projects. She is a member of "godmother of the GGNRA" Amy Meyer's People for Presidio/ Parks. Her work includes a Presidio-wide study and vision for gardens in 2008. She co-founded Urbia Adventure League, "Sense of Place" adventures for families with Damien Raffa. Currently, Barbara collects artifacts in an independent archaeology project, and you will find her in the garden most days. Barbara Corff and Mark Youngkin joined the community garden in November 2000 and still actively tend the garden grounds.

Mark Youngkin moved to California in 1987 to become a professional geologist overseeing toxic cleanup projects involving environmental investigation and remediation. Mark became the Community Co-Chair for the Presidio of San Francisco Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) in 1995 and served for 20 years overseeing the toxic waste cleanup of the Presidio. The RAB's Final Report in 2015 relates the amazing story of successful community activism. Doug Kern, an original RAB member and facilitator, was a community gardener and stalwart advocate for the environmental cleanup of the Army's toxic contamination legacy for over 20 years.



Damien Raffa and Michael Chasse families tending their community garden plots circa 2007. Image: photograph courtesy of Michael Chasse 2023.

In 1997, Shane Tonu Eagleton, a Polynesian Indigenous environmental artist from New Zealand, collaborated with Brian O'Neil, former Superintendent of the GGNRA, The Cultural Conservancy, the Biodynamic Association, and Pacific Islander Cultural Association to carve wood sculptures at the Presidio Nursery from recycled fallen Monterey Cypress trees. His work celebrates native Indigenous cultures around the world. Tonu worked from his art studio in the original native plant nursery on the Presidio for 2-3 years.

In 1999, "Tonu created four park benches out of recycled wood from the Presidio for the Presidio Trust to install in upper Fort Scott"

(Source: Tonu Shane Eagleton Home Page at www.hawaii.edu/oceanic/rotuma/images/Eagleton/eagletonhome.htm). In 2005, Garden

Coordinator Jean Koch pointed out the disassembled pieces from two of the benches in a pile near the Dawn Redwood tree at the Garden. Mark Youngkin reassembled the benches, and for a decade, gardeners enjoyed sitting on the benches under the shade of the dawn redwood tree. Eventually, the benches succumbed to wood rot and the remnant carved planks now function as upright bird perches.



Mother Kohola redwood whale sculpture, 1996 Aloha Festival, Shane Tonu Eagleton. Image 1996 at www.artandarchitecture-sf.com/tag/shane-tonu-eagleton.



Two bench sculptures crafted by the Presidio's Polynesian wood sculptor Shane Tonu Eagleton for display in the community garden in 1999. In 2005, Mark Youngkin (shown) reassembled the forgotten benches under the Dawn Redwood tree for gardeners to enjoy. Images from 2007 courtesy of Barbara Corff.

Composting & Garden Expansion

In November 1997, a collaboration between the San Francisco Conservation Corps, the National Park Service, Presidio Trust, and the Golden Gate National Parks Association, created an AmeriCorps volunteer team on the Presidio. Emily Drennen, AmeriCorps Community Outreach Specialist at the time, described the program in a 1998 article (Drennen 1998). A total of 20 volunteers received specialized training on the Presidio. A quote from the article says:

Then, with their newfound expertise, the AmeriCorps members took the lead in educating and directing community volunteers working on the habitat restoration needs of Crissy Field and its supporting nurseries – the team's area of primary focus. Together, the AmeriCorps members and community volunteers are growing and outplanting native plants, eradicating invasive plants, and helping to remove debris from Crissy Field.

When the Presidio Trust assumed management of the interior 80% of the Presidio of San Francisco in 1998, it continued the initiative and undertook programs to increase public and community stewardship and involvement in the Presidio's cultural and natural resources. The Presidio Trust recognized the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden as important for public outreach and educational programming. The community garden was a leader in introducing the onsite composting of green waste.



Presidio Community Victory Garden sign used by the Presidio Trust stewardship and educational programs. Community garden programs used decoupage and hand painted signs at educational and public outreach events.

The Presidio Trust also started a program to develop green waste recycling and composting in the Presidio. The Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association, Inc., which was at the Thoreau Center for Sustainability, partnered with the GGNRA, GGNPA, and the Presidio Trust to produce high-quality biodynamic compost on a large scale as part of a comprehensive waste management system. Marney Blair was the organic debris specialist at the Presidio Nursery. Her biography on the Biodynamic Association website says "Marney managed a large-scale biodynamic composting operation in San Francisco's Presidio. The facility created compost for habitat restoration projects and supplied a growing medium for all the plants in the native plant nursery." An San Francisco Chronicle article describes Marney Blair's role in the program at the Presidio (L. Van Cleef 2000):

Since this former Army base became a national park three years ago (1994), the Park Service has focused on restoring and preserving native plant habitats. Their Native Plant Nursery is growing more than 40,000 plants from locally collected seeds to be used in restoration efforts on Baker Beach, Crissy Field, and the rest of the Presidio." "Blair began her composting career at Other Avenues, a collective health food store in San Francisco's Sunset District where she composted the store's waste. She arrived at the Presidio three years ago (1994) as a habitat restoration volunteer." "She approached the Natural Resources staff at the Presidio about starting a small-scale composting program. Within a year (1995) the staff asked her to join the nursery full-time to expand the program she had started. Blair says economics was the primary selling point when she first presented her compost idea.

Blair and her staff of two compost 25 to 30 cubic yards of green debris a week in addition to a 20 cubic yard dumpster full of horse manure from the park stables that they get every 10 days. Her compost piles occupy a converted parking lot the size of two tennis courts. Six enormous windrows (compost mounds) in various stages of decomposition cover the asphalt. The mounds are approximately four feet high by eight feet long." "To feed these forces, she adds a secret ingredient to the compost piles –biodynamic preparations made from herbs. Biodynamic practitioners call their preparations, "medicine for the earth" and argue that plant and soil organisms can benefit from the healing powers of herbs just like humans." Blair uses preparations made from yarrow, chamomile, nettle, oak bark, dandelion, and valerian that she purchases through the Biodynamic Association.

Since July 1, 1998, the Presidio Trust has managed the community garden. Composting has been a key element of organic gardening since the start of the community garden in 1996. Presidio Trust photographs dated 1998 and 1999 show active compost piles in the community garden. After 2010, the Presidio Trust transformed the former compost area with tables into classroom space for educational and outreach programs. The Presidio-wide composting facility now collected green waste and delivered compost to the Garden.

In 1999, the Presidio Trust started its compost and regeneration program for the restoration and healthy maintenance of the Presidio's remediation sites, the Presidio Forest, natural areas, landscaped grounds, and the Presidio Golf Course. A long-term goal was to develop education and research programs to study the benefits of using compost. The Presidio Trust in its publication titled the Presidio Post says the following (Presidio Post, April 2000):

A project close to the hearts of Regeneration Program staff is the restoration of the historic Community Garden in the Fort Scott area. With the help of Presidio tenant partner the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association and the San Francisco Waldorf School, an extraordinary organic garden cultivated by Presidio residents is coming to life.



Photograph in 2008 showing the active composting area at the community garden with the Gardener's Shed in the background. Image 2008 courtesy of Barbara Corff.

By 2002, the compost program produced over 800 cubic yards of biodynamic compost a year. In 2003, the Presidio Trust received the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2003 Environmental Achievement Award for its work on the program. Craig Middleton, former Executive Director of the Presidio Trust said, "I believe what we have started in our compost and regeneration program will serve as a model for other facilities." (Source: Presidio Trust Press Release dated April 8, 2003, on its website).

The 2002 Presidio Trust's *Final Environmental Impact Statement* on page 165 describes the "Presidio Community Garden" and "World War II Victory Garden" as follows:

The Presidio Community Garden is in the Fort Scott Planning District on a site that served as a World War II Victory Garden. The garden was re-established beginning in 1996 by a group of residents and park employees. Garden membership is open to residents, employees, and long-time park volunteers. Currently the garden has around 20 members. Members work in an individual plot as well as communal spaces. A work party meets each month to perform garden maintenance and special projects.



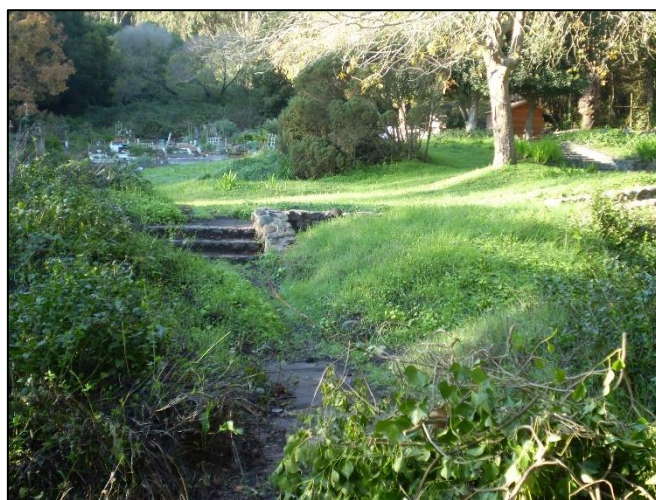
Closeup excerpt from color aerial photograph dated February 2004 showing conditions at Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden. White line is an artifact of longitude grid lines. North is to top of aerial photograph. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. Source: Google Earth Pro 2022. Image Maxar Technologies, Landsat / Copernicus.

The 2002 Presidio Trust Management Plan describes future action at Fort Winfield Scott's historic landscape features including formal gardens on pages 87 and 91 as follows:

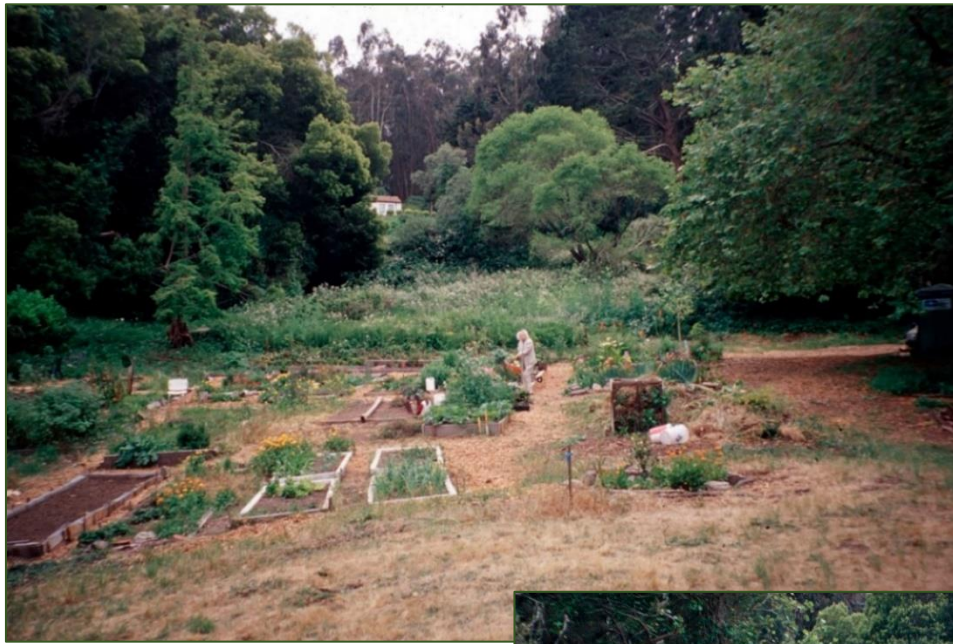
Formal Landscape and Natural Elements. The district contains a variety of historic landscape features such as formal gardens, walkways, vistas, retaining walls, and horticulture plantings. These features date from different periods and are largely overgrown." "The overgrown gardens and landscape features of the district will be rehabilitated. Other important landscape features, including historic roads, paths, retaining walls, and individual gardens, will be preserved. Remnant natural systems, including Dragonfly Creek, will be managed to restore their environmental integrity as much as possible, and rare plants and their habitat will be protected and enhanced.

The accompanying aerial photograph dated February 2004 shows the expansion of the community garden with the addition of new garden plots (within white circle). From 2002 through 2018, Presidio Trust staff, interns, archaeology volunteers, volunteer gardeners, and AmeriCorps teams cleared Acacia trees, invasive ivy, Himalayan blackberry, and ground cover revealing the 1938-1939 parterre rose garden with alleyways, stone walls, and planting beds, which had lain overgrown since the 1980s.

On the aerial photograph above, the overgrown parterre rose garden surrounds the 1938 fountain pool shown within the yellow circle. Through the efforts of volunteers and park staff, the Garden community rehabilitated the parterre rose garden with new raised planting beds and planted with native plants, flowers, herbs, potted fruit trees, and communal vegetable planting beds.



Photograph looking west from 2008 showing the overgrown 1938-1939 parterre rose garden after gardeners dug out the paver-stone stairway, but before removing the fill dirt pile. The area in the foreground is the future home of the Herb Garden that staff, interns, and volunteers planted 2011-2013. Image from 2008 courtesy of Barbara Corff.



View looking west at community garden planting beds as seen circa 2002-2003. Image: original slide circa 2002-2003 in collection of Mycological Society of San Francisco library; courtesy of MacKenzie Hridel, librarian and archivist in 2022.

View looking southwest at community garden planting beds as seen circa 2002-2003. Mycological Society of San Francisco's Mushroom Garden shown at lower left corner. Image: original slide circa 2002-2003 in collection of Mycological Society of San Francisco library; courtesy of MacKenzie Hridel, librarian and archivist in 2022.



Community gardener Jan Blum inspecting the Mycological Society of San Francisco's Mushroom Garden planting beds next to her plot circa 2002-2003. Image: original slides circa 2002-2003 in collection of Mycological Society of San Francisco library; courtesy of MacKenzie Hridel, librarian and archivist in 2022.

In spring 2005, neighboring residents and gardeners' children enjoy hunting for Easter eggs during the annual Easter Egg Hunt at the community garden. Source: image from 2005 courtesy of Damian Raffa.



Neighborhood residents, gardeners, and children enjoyed foraging for Himalayan blackberries in the thick brambles at the western edge of the community garden in 2005. By 2015, the blackberry patch had become overgrown with Acacia trees and invasive ivy. The Presidio Trust cleared and replaced the Acacia tree stand with a heritage fruit orchard in 2022. Source: image from 2005 courtesy of Damian Raffa.



A potluck gathering and garden workday at the community garden in 2005. The photograph shows the Gardener's Shed donated by the San Francisco Waldorf School and built by community gardeners and school families in 1997. The Gardener's Shed was the only building at the community garden from 1997 to 2018. Source: image from 2005 courtesy of Damian Raffa.



Presidio volunteer and community gardener Mark Youngkin in 2006 on his newly built plastic-lumber bridge and drainage ditch (creek) used to convey rainwater runoff from Wisser Court to the grassland below. The ditch keeps rainwater from pooling every winter in a large mudhole at the former composting (now outdoor classroom) and Gardener's Shed area.

Presidio volunteers and community gardeners Barbara Corff and Mark Youngkin at their first community garden plot in 2004.



Photograph from 2016 showing residents and community garden volunteers working in lower terrace planting bed at the uncovered 1938-1939 Army-WPA-CCC parterre rose garden. Volunteer gardeners planted the fountain pool with iris, daffodils, and dahlias. Image from 2016 courtesy of Presidio Trust.

The 2008 *Fort Scott Cultural Landscape Assessment* describes the community garden using the name "Kobbe Community Garden" area on pages 107-108. The description on these pages is comprehensive and describes most cultural landscape features seen today. The community garden has significant historical cultural and character-defining landscape features. The *Cultural Landscape Assessment* described the existing integrity of the community garden as follows:

However, in its current condition, the design for the formal garden features is fragmented and no longer provides an organization framework for this area. Portions of the path system are gone, and erosion, the loss of plant materials, and the encroachment of ivy, blackberry, and mattress wire vine have impacted the design.

The 2008 *Cultural Landscape Assessment* recommended preservation of the "Kobbe Community Garden" area due to its significant cultural landscape features. The *Cultural Landscape Assessment* presented seventeen (17) treatment recommendations for the community garden on pages 140-141. The recommendations cover the assessment and rehabilitation of the cultural landscape features including recommendation 15 as follows:

Rehabilitate the lower terrace for use by the community gardens. Restore the central path that provided the spatial framework for the lower terrace. The community garden plots should be reconfigured along either side of this central path. Repair and/or rehabilitate, as required, the ornamental hard-scape feature located at the east end of this terrace. Restore the path (oriented north-to-south) that provided a connection across the east end of the lower terrace. Design a new, compatible set of steps to provide a connection to the playground (to the south). (The steps on the north side, which connect to the upper terrace, are extant.).



Present-day view of 1938-1939 Army-WPA-CCC cobble stone fountain pool listed in WPA records within the parterre rose garden. Acacia trees and ground cover concealed the parterre rose garden until restored by garden volunteers and Presidio Trust staff from 2002 to 2010.



Present-day view of cleared and exposed 1938-1939 Army-WPA-CCC cobblestone walls and paver stone stairway connecting upper greenhouse terrace with lower parterre rose garden terrace planting beds.



Photograph from 2010 showing lowermost part of 1938-1939 Army-WPA-CCC parterre rose garden paths and masonry cobblestone walls in a traditional Victorian geometric planting bed design. Fill dirt and invasive plants covered the geometric pattern until cleared by volunteer gardeners and Presidio Trust staff/interns from 2002 through 2010. From 2011-2013, Presidio Trust interns and volunteer gardeners planted this area as a new communal Herb Garden.



Photograph dated 2009 shows the Garden with in-ground garden plots (5-foot by 10-foot) and 1997 Gardener's Shed on left. Mark Youngkin added the drainage ditch with bridges in 2006 to divert Wisser Court runoff away from the compost area where a large mudhole formed during winter months. The Garden's in-ground planting beds remained in an east-west configuration until the Presidio Trust installed new raised planting beds in 2010 oriented north-south.

Jean Koch was an AmeriCorps volunteer who joined the Presidio Trust in November 1996 to work on the compost and regeneration program. She helped install the original garden water line in 1997. From circa 2001 through May 2020, Jean Koch managed the Garden as the Compost and Community Garden Coordinator. Cristina Prokop recalled that once the Presidio Trust assigned a garden coordinator, the rules and regulations soon followed. From 2000 to 2010, the number of garden plots increased to fill demand by residents. Jean Koch, Charity Maybury, park stewards, and AmeriCorps teams created new garden plots by clearing underbrush and creating new plots. Gardeners outlined the beds with wood, stones or bricks and plots could be artistic with unique arrangements of pots, flowers, logs, and stones.

Gardeners attended regular garden workdays to weed paths, spread wood chips, rake leaves, turn over compost piles, and other maintenance tasks.

On community workdays, Jean Koch and nursery stewards brought vegetable seedlings from the Presidio Nursery for distribution to the gardeners. In 2007, the Presidio Trust created a new communal plot with herb garden by combining two plots for the Crissy Field Center to use in its education programs. Families and visitors who could not commit to tending a plot full time used the communal plot.

Starting in 2010, the Garden staff, interns, native plant nursery staff, and an AmeriCorps team reconstructed the Garden's 30 planting beds into 42 new raised planting beds reoriented northwest to southeast. The team constructed the new 4-foot by 10-foot raised beds using recycled plastic wood underlain by gopher wire and weed cloth then filled with imported clean topsoil and Presidio-derived green organic compost.



Jean Koch standing in new office-workshop holding community garden grown organic zucchini in 2019. Jean was the Presidio Trust's Compost and Community Garden Coordinator from circa 2001 until May 2020. Image 2019 courtesy Presidio Trust.



View in early 2010 showing Garden staff, interns, native plant nursery staff, and an AmeriCorps team rebuilding the Garden's 30 planting beds into 42 new raised planting beds reoriented northwest to southeast to match the original plan of the main alleys in the WWII Victory Garden.



View northeast showing new raised planting beds constructed in April 2010. Barbara Corff shown standing next to a temporary home for orphaned garden plants displaced by the new raised bed construction. Before the Presidio Trust built new raised beds in the orphan plant location, volunteers replanted the orphaned plants into community planting beds along the outside boundary of the community garden.



View in 2011 showing removal of large dirt pile that covered part of the lower parterre rose garden. Garden staff, interns, native plant nursery staff, and an AmeriCorps team moved the dirt uphill to fill in and level a low-lying area for the new Anna's hummingbird habitat Exhibit number 8 and six future raised planting beds. After uncovering the lowermost 1938 parterre rose garden planting beds at the southeast corner of the parterre garden, gardeners planted the uncovered beds as a new Herb Garden. Note the residential building in background on Kobbe Avenue also visible in photographs above.



Closeup excerpt from aerial photograph dated June 2007 showing original 1996 garden plots oriented west to east. Clearing of Acacia trees and underbrush is visible in the lower parterre rose garden around the circular fountain pool. Gardener's Shed not visible beneath tree canopy. North to top of photo. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. White line is an artifact of longitude grid lines. Source: Google Earth Pro 2022, Image 2022 Maxar Technologies, Landsat / Copernicus.



Closeup excerpt from aerial photograph dated May 2011 showing reconstructed garden plots now oriented northwest to southeast. Ongoing clearing of Acacia trees and underbrush visible in lower parterre rose garden. Uncovered parterre rose garden with white paths shown on east boundary. Anna's hummingbird habitat Exhibit number 8 shown as circular planting bed. North to top of photo. White line is an artifact of longitude grid lines. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. Source: Google Earth Pro 2022, Image 2022 Maxar Technologies, Landsat / Copernicus.

In 2011, garden staff, interns, native plant nursery staff, and an AmeriCorps team removed a large dirt pile that covered part of the lowermost planting beds at the southeast corner of the 1938 parterre rose garden. The team moved the dirt pile uphill to fill and level a low-lying area for the Anna's hummingbird habitat Exhibit number 8 and the future installation of six more raised communal planting beds. After uncovering the lowermost 1938 parterre rose garden planting beds and alleyways, interns and community gardeners planted the uncovered planting beds as a community Herb Garden.

Mycological Society Mushroom Garden

From 2001-2005, Professor Ken Litchfield, a fungophile and expert at mushroom cultivation, and the Mycological Society of San Francisco (MSSF) created a demonstration Mushroom Garden in the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden. Founded in 1950, the MSSF promotes the enjoyment and preservation of fungi habitats and to promote the right to collect mushrooms on public lands. Ken became the MSSF's cultivation committee chair in October 2000 and began a monthly column called the "Cultivation Corner" in the MSSF newsletter named the Mycena News. He was also the mushroom cultivation instructor at both Merritt College in Oakland and Randall Museum in San Francisco. During mushroom cultivation workshops at the Presidio's Crissy Field Center in 2000, he interacted with the large and then highly active natural resource restoration community on the Presidio.

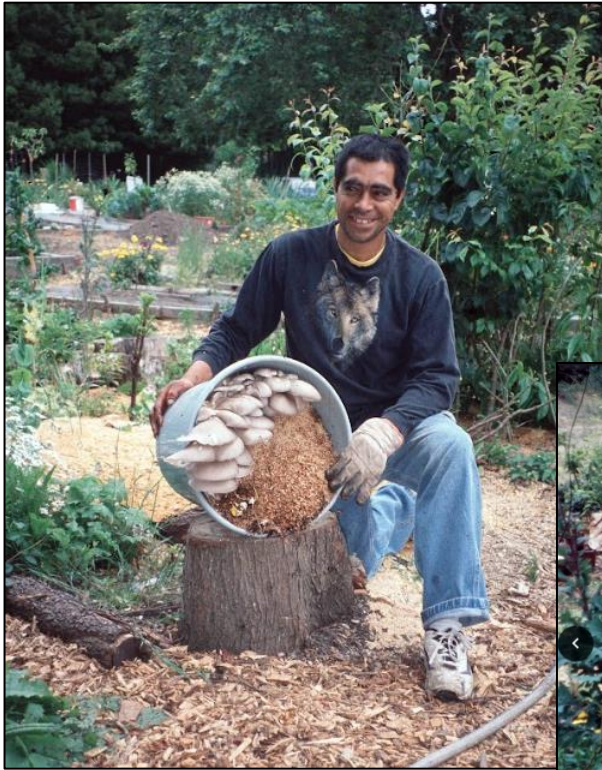
In a September 2022 phone interview with Barbara Corff, Professor Ken Litchfield recalled the MSSF Presidio Mushroom Garden at the community garden. The MSSF had a laboratory and garden at the Randall Museum in San Francisco. When museum remodeling began in November 2001, the MSSF started a laboratory and satellite mushroom garden on the Presidio in association with the native plant nursery. In his column "Cultivation Corner" on page 6 of the October 2001 issue of Mycena News, Ken describes the new mushroom garden (Source: back issues of Mycena News at mssf.org/mycena-news/issues.html):

That also means that, for real, we have been moving the MSSF Mushroom Garden in the Randall courtyard to a nice new San Francisco location. We have wonderful soil, water features, a shady woodland grotto area, a sunny section for terraced organic gardening, a long fence for vines and leaning plugged logs, and a gathering area for outdoor classes. We have plenty of room and resources to experiment with things like: the fastest way to convert eucalyptus logs or chips to sulfur shelf and then to soil; the best herbs and edibles for shading, humidifying, and flavoring mushrooms in the sunny ornamental edible section; slow non labor intensive methods for converting terracing logs and stumps to mushrooms and then soil; quick methods for using compost feeders to break down raw compost materials like horse manure, grass clippings, and wood chips; growing corn for huitlacoche; etc. This is all in a community garden setting where we can work and share and teach and learn with other organic gardeners.

The MSSF Presidio Mushroom Garden was active from 2001 through 2005, holding seminars, fungi cultivation workshops, mushroom garden workdays, field surveys, foraging trips on the Presidio, and multi-organizational community potluck gatherings. On the Presidio, the MSSF had access to copious amounts of fallen tree trunks, wood chips from various trees, a well-established composting operation, and a community of like-minded natural resource volunteers and staff experts. Concurrently with the mushroom garden, the MSSF built the Presidio Laboratory in the Native Plants Program's communal warehouse near the native plant nursery. Sherry Carvajal was the Project Manager for the lab and nursery facilities. Norm Andresen was the Cultivation Manager and lead trainer for all cultivation techniques. The lab had two 16-foot by 32-foot spaces for 20-40 MSSF members to use. Ken described the lab and garden experience in his November 2001 Cultivation Corner column:

And the lab is a pleasant walk or bike ride from the mushroom garden where we are performing our initial experiments. The whole place is just a fun, beautiful, and pleasing experience and we are very happy to be a part of our new community. We look forward to sponsoring many educational and entertaining events in the months and years to come."

Ken Litchfield and the MSSF convinced the Presidio Trust to allow community fungi foraging on the Presidio. The MSSF was active in discovering and cataloging the Presidio fungal species, native fungi restoration projects, organic materials recycling and composting, and an experimental toxic waste project exploring fungal bioremediation of petroleum contaminated soils for use at Army cleanup sites across the Presidio.



Enrique Sanchez, the MSSF Garden and Recycling Manager, collected and fed recycled materials and compost to the mushroom garden and organic planting beds. Image: original slide circa 2002-2003 in collection of Mycological Society of San Francisco library; courtesy of MacKenzie Hridel, librarian and archivist in 2022.



Two closeup views of Mycological Society of San Francisco's Mushroom Garden circa 2002-2003.

Images: original slides circa 2002-2003 in collection of Mycological Society of San Francisco library; courtesy of MacKenzie Hridel, librarian and archivist in 2022.



Below: composite panorama view looking west at community garden in 2002-2003 with Mycological Society's Mushroom Garden at left side of panel.



Ken Litchfield and MSSF volunteers started preparation of the Presidio Fungal Species List as described by Ken in his column Cultivation Corner in Mycena News dated September 2002:

They are working with us, so we have now set up a system of procedures, training, and facilities for MSSF members, native plant volunteers, and Presidio staff to collect, ID, preserve, and catalog the fungal species of the Presidio.

Community gardeners remember Ken Litchfield as an energetic and hardworking gardener, who was always eager to share his knowledge about organic gardening, herbs, and cultivating mushrooms. The Presidio mushroom garden was a MSSF demonstration project showing the potential use of mushrooms in urban composting and organic gardening. The mushroom garden spanned four large planting beds and a triangular Allium bulb plot along the southern fence line of the community garden. A log terrace with steps separated the upper and lower planting beds. The MSSF members erected two nine-foot-high Pine tree logs and leaned logs against the Army-era perimeter security fence to grow mushrooms on the upright tree trunks. Enrique Sanchez, the MSSF Garden and Recycling Manager, collected and fed recycled materials and compost to the mushroom garden and organic planting beds. The mushroom garden stood out because of the inoculated logs lining the planting beds and the artful arrangements of plants, logs, and stones.

To supply humidity and shade for the mushroom cultivation, the MSSF planted 20-30 fruit tree saplings including peach, plum, apple, and pear, around a small water feature in an area called the mushroom grotto. The MSSF gardeners planted corn, tomatoes, kale, carrots, kohlrabi, cabbage, peppers, basil, chives, strawberries, garlic, chives, shallots, onions, chard, dock, French sorrel, horseradish, thyme, hummingbird sage, mints, hummingbird lobelia, and Gai Choy mustard. Among the garden plots, the MSSF interspersed mushroom plantings included Stearium, orange jelly, shaggy parasol, turkey tails, garden giants, Blewit (blue hat), and oyster mushrooms (Source: Mycena News, Cultivation Corner column, December 2001, page 6).

During 2003, the MSSF transferred its mushroom garden plantings and fruit trees back to the Randall Museum's newly remodeled courtyard. The MSSF kept the Presidio satellite mushroom garden for another two years. After part of the roof collapsed in 2004, the Presidio Trust condemned the former Army building and communal warehouse used by the MSSF for its mushroom lab. Ken Litchfield then moved the mushroom lab and mushroom demonstration garden to Merritt Community College in Oakland Hills, where Ken was teaching mushroom cultivation and organic gardening classes for the Landscape Horticulture Department. By late 2005, the MSSF had vacated the Presidio and ended mushroom cultivation in the community garden. The thornless raspberry patch that gardeners enjoy today, where Ken Litchfield had his mushroom grotto, is the only remaining vestige of the former MSSF mushroom garden (Sources for this section: K. Litchfield personal communication 2022; back issues of Ken Litchfield's column Cultivation Corner in MSSF Mycena News monthly newsletters dated 2001-2005 in MSSF Mycena News archive at mssf.org/mycena-news/issues.html).



Fungophile, mushroom cultivation expert, and instructor Professor Ken Litchfield (wearing hat with owl feathers) teaching his outdoor mushroom education class in 2010. Source: www.flickr.com, image in album Grow Mushrooms in Your Own Garden dated January 30, 2010, by Garden for the Environment.

Garden Programs & Stewards

The 2010 Garden reconstruction was part of a larger neighborhood garden expansion and stewardship program. The 2008 Garden Vision Plan document by Barbara Corff and Damian Raffa recommended expansion of community gardens in all neighborhoods of the Presidio. Over 12 years, the Presidio Trust constructed eight neighborhood community gardens, increasing the number of garden plots to over 200 raised beds in total. The gardens practiced organic gardening and green composting as an educational demonstration project for outreach to schools and other groups by the Presidio Garden Stewards (Presidio Trust website).

Photograph from January 2012 showing gardeners Jean Koch, Roberta Morganstern, Joann Winship, and Presidio Trust staff and interns at a Garden workday and preparing illustrations for an educational project. Gardeners used the workdays for garden maintenance such as compost pile turning, path weeding, planting, and general cleanup. The events often involved a potluck meal and socializing after gardening. Image courtesy of Barbara Corff.



Photograph from 2011 showing exhibit sign installed at entrance to Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden, directing visitors to the Presidio Habitats exhibition number 8, titled Anna's Hummingbird Habitat. The exhibit was situated in the grassland next to the lower parterre rose garden. Image courtesy of Barbara Corff.

In 2009-2011, Presidio Habitats, a site-based art exhibition conceived by For-Site Foundation, brought visitors to a lesser-known part of the Presidio in and around the Fort Winfield Scott campus. An international group of artists, architects, and design specialists were invited to build habitat exhibits for specific animal residents of the Presidio. In 2009, For-Site Foundation installed the creative exhibit called "Habitat for Anna's Hummingbird" within the lower grassland area next to the parterre rose garden. The following photograph shows the habitat exhibit planted with the native plants commonly found on the Presidio and used by the year-round bird resident Anna's hummingbird. The Presidio Trust replaced the Presidio Habitats Exhibit 8 with new raised community planting beds in 2018.



The Anna's hummingbird habitat Exhibit number 8 within the lower grassland area from 2009 until removal in 2011. Source: Chadwick Studio, Habitat for Anna's hummingbird, 2010 (installation view). Image by Monique Deschaines, at website address www.for-site.org/project/presidio-habitats-chadwick-studio-habitat-for-annas-hummingbird/.

The Garden supports a diverse community of mammals, reptiles, plants, birds, and insects. Great blue herons, great horned owls, red-tailed hawks, foxes, and coyote suppress overpopulation of rodents particularly gophers and voles. Wildlife includes the Western Fence Lizard, slender salamanders, native bees, endangered checkerspot butterfly, warblers, hummingbirds, and a handful of squirrels. Seasonal plants in the communal areas include naked ladies, wild cucumber, native blackberry, and California figwort. Gardeners enjoy frost-free year-round gardening without the need for deer fencing. Presidio resources are Lobos Creek water, compost, and wood chips.



Presidio Nursery Learning Garden sign used at the Presidio Nursery and community garden by Jean Koch, Presidio Trust Garden Coordinator, for educational purposes circa 2005-2010. Source: personal communication, Christa Conforti, Integrated Pest Management Specialist, Presidio Trust (2022). Image: 2022 courtesy of Mark Youngkin.

The Presidio Trust recognizes the community garden as a local bird habitat and bird watching hot spot. Over the years, volunteer birding monitor Kim Meyer made monthly visits to the community garden, recording nesting owls, raptors, and songbirds. Wildlife photographers enjoy visiting the Garden as well as garden enthusiasts, neighbors, hikers, and tourists. Visitors enjoy sitting in the sun or lying in the hammock, hosting picnics, and asking the community gardeners questions as they go about their organic gardening.

The following collage shows the birds, insects, and plants that gardeners enjoy seeing.



Examples of garden wildlife include red tailed hawk, fungi, native bees, Anna's hummingbird, slender salamander, Allen's hummingbird, and woodpecker. The collage includes former community gardeners Liz and Kate Clevenger in 2010. Images 2009-2011 courtesy Barbara Corff; garden bird photographs courtesy of Robert Ho, local wildlife photographer.

Former Garden Coordinator and volunteer manager, Jenny McIlvaine (now Assistant Director, Employee Support Services at the Presidio Trust) managed volunteer garden workdays and tours for visiting corporations and organizations. Bi-yearly interns over the years studied and implemented a diverse number of projects, ranging from bird monitoring, composting, public education programs, permaculture studies, building an herb garden, and temporary wood-fired cob oven exhibit.

In his 1996 article, Peter Holloran discusses the impact that interns have had on stewardship conservation efforts at the Presidio (P. Holloran 1996):

Performing many of the same functions as park staff, interns have provided crucial energy and direction to the program since its beginning. In terns have drafted restoration plans, designed, and conducted baseline-monitoring programs, and reviewed environmental compliance documentation while performing or supervising much of the on-the-groundwork." "Initially appealing mostly to recent college graduates from privileged backgrounds, the internship matured when motivated high-school students with diverse backgrounds joined the program during the summer of 1995." "The Presidio Stewardship Education Program, begun in 1994 as a pilot program and now serving classes from five high schools and nine middle schools in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)." "The native-plant nursery is easily the most popular program among youths. Run primarily by park interns, including high school students, the nursery sponsors Wednesday and Saturday afternoon drop-in programs that help meet the park's ambitious goal of producing 50,000-70,000 plants for revegetation projects each year." "Propagation began in early July 1995, and by October more than 6,800 volunteer hours had been logged in the nursery by interns, volunteers, and middle-school and high-school students.

The garden hosted popular workdays and monthly picnics, where gardeners and volunteers weeded paths, tended communal areas, turned compost piles, and shared recipes and food from their plots. Neighbors attended an annual fall harvest event where the Garden supplied pumpkins for carving, education, a potluck dinner, and entertainment for neighborhood families.

By 2018, there were 42 raised planting beds in the upper community garden. Another 6 communal planting beds in the lower garden originally grew food for Presidio tenant restaurants and the Golden Gate Club, but the planting beds now serve as community growing space. Gardeners cultivated a large patch of thornless raspberry situated on the former site of the Mycological Society of San Francisco's demonstration mushroom garden from 2001-2005. Hanging on the perimeter fence was a large potted Army-era Elkhorn Fern, stolen in 2022.

Volunteer gardeners led by Jan Blum planted a fern garden around the Dawn Redwood tree in early 2002, and Western Sword ferns have thrived in this area.



Exhibit on garden perimeter fence made by Presidio Trust interns showing birds commonly seen in the community garden.

Raised beds around the parterre rose garden's fountain pool are a delightful cutting garden with seasonal flowers including calendula, sweet William, ornamental onion, sweet peas, dahlias, various roses, blueberry bushes, coral bells, iris, and orange-colored crocosmia. Other raised beds in the parterre rose garden grow squash and pumpkin as well as ornamental flowers and a variety of plants including mug wort, and fava beans. Communal planting beds include a wide variety of plants including climbing rose, hydrangea, heritage roses, scented geranium, butterfly bush, daffodils, narcissus, yellow eye grass, mint, Army-era fuchsia, flowering currant, ferns, strawberry, succulents, California figwort, and flowering plum trees.



Community volunteers weeding and planting lower parterre rose garden fountain pool at garden workday on Martin Luther King holiday 2019. Image from 2019 courtesy Presidio Trust, photograph by Dan Friedman, Presidio Trust Volunteer.

Jean Koch, Garden Coordinator, with AmeriCorps team and park stewards building new raised planting beds in lower parterre rose garden in 2019. Image from 2019 courtesy Presidio Trust, photograph by Dan Friedman, Presidio Trust Volunteer.



Interns and community gardeners at garden workday on Martin Luther King holiday in 2019. Image from 2019 courtesy Presidio Trust, photograph by Dan Friedman, Presidio Trust Volunteer.

Students in class at an educational outreach program as part of the Presidio Nursery Learning Garden in 2018. Source: image 2018 courtesy Presidio Trust.





Present-day view looking east showing restored section of former 1938-1939 WPA parterre rose garden. During the years 2011-2013, garden staff and volunteers planted the restored space as a community herb garden.

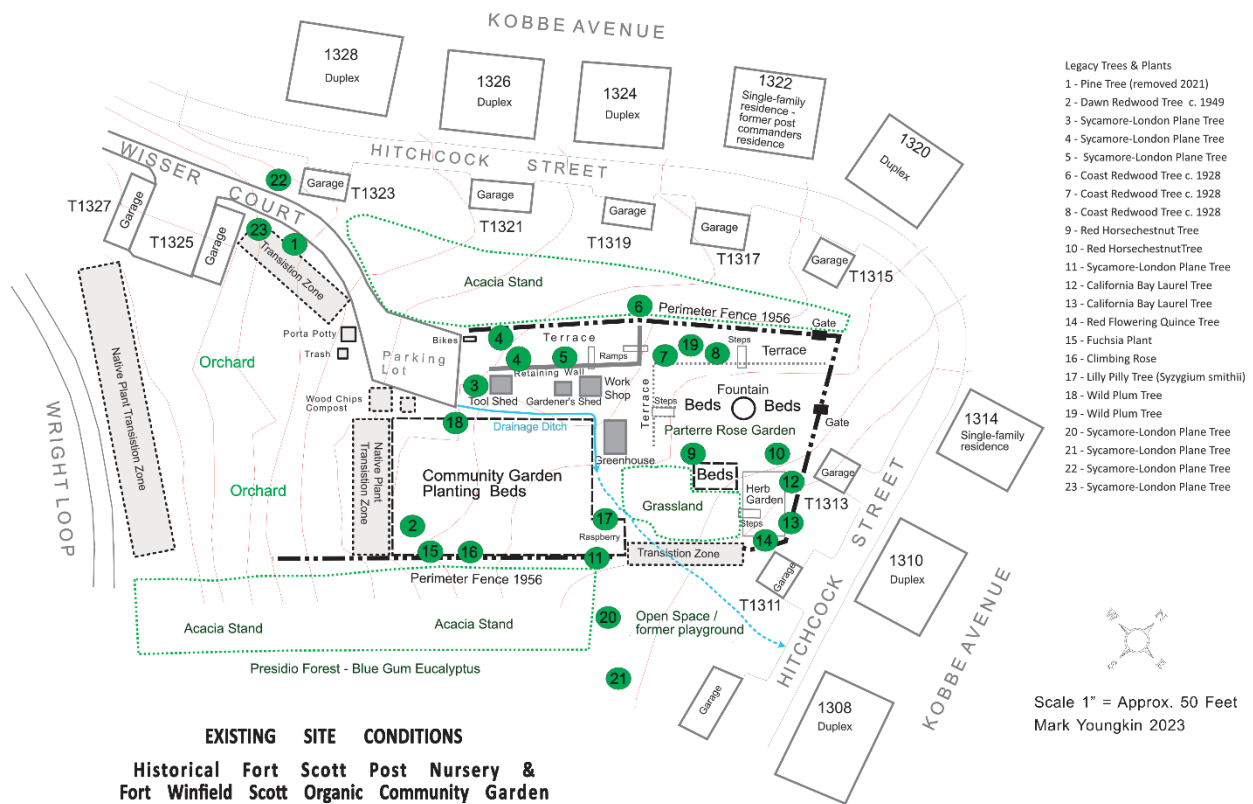
From 2010 to 2013, the Presidio Trust's garden staff installed new water faucets and raised planting beds in the restored parterre rose garden. From 2011-2013, volunteer gardeners and Presidio Trust staff cleared the lowest section of the restored parterre rose garden to plant a community herb garden. The present-day photograph above shows the herb garden planted with sage, thyme, lavender, rosemary, lemon verbena, scented geraniums, varieties of mint, native Yerba Buena, alongside a lemon tree and Army-era quince tree.

From 2010 to 2020, the Garden Stewards program supported and enhanced the Presidio's neighborhood gardens while teaching about horticulture and sustainable gardening. The stewards tended beds, turned over compost piles, mulched paths, washed pots, or transplanted seedlings. The Presidio's community gardens served as gathering spaces for residents to meet their neighbors, learn to grow wholesome organic foods, instruct their children about gardening, and connect with nature.

In 2018, the Presidio Trust and garden coordinator Jean Koch built a new greenhouse, workshop, and raised planting beds to support expanded community programs and outreach. In 2019, The Presidio Trust built a new tool shed completing the existing suite of buildings. Outdoor furnishings added to the garden included two rocking chairs, a table, chairs, picnic tables, child sized picnic table, and new tools. During the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic lockdown and financial concerns, the Presidio Trust laid off Garden Coordinator Jean Koch and paused the stewardship, composting, internship, and educational outreach programs. The garden is still active and supported by a combination of Presidio Trust staff, nearby Presidio residents, and volunteer gardeners.



View looking north showing winter conditions at the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden in December 2022. From left to right visible in background: tool shed (2019), Gardener's Shed (1997), office-work shop (2018), and greenhouse (2018).



Drawing in October 2022 showing existing landscape features at the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden created in 1996. The U.S. Army's historical Fort Scott Post Nursery and Post Green House once occupied this garden site from 1912 through 1985. Source: drawing by Mark Youngkin using historical aerial photographs and present-day field inspection.



Present-day photograph looking east at WPA funded parterre rose garden created in 1938-1939. The photograph shows a paver stone stairway, rock cobble walls, planting beds, and alleyways covered with wood chips. The central fountain pool is visible behind the wood rose trellis.



Closeup excerpt from aerial photograph dated 2022 showing conditions after the 2010 to 2020 rehabilitation of the community garden by Presidio Trust staff and garden volunteers. Aerial view after clearing of Acacia stand and overgrown Himalayan blackberry patch during the 2021-2022 Wright Loop Reforestation project to create a new heritage fruit orchard on the former 1912 Post Nursery site. North to top of photo. Annotations by Mark Youngkin 2022. Source: Google Earth Pro 2022. Imagery: 2022 Maxar Technologies, U.S. Geological Survey.

Wright Loop Reforestation

In 2001, the Presidio Trust's new Vegetation Management Plan designated the community garden as a Landscape Vegetation Zone where gardeners can plant, prune, and harvest ornamental plants, flowers, and vegetables on a year-round basis. The plan designated the adjoining historical Post Nursery area east of Wright Loop and west of the community planting beds, as a Historic Forest Zone (Presidio Trust, 2001). During Fall 2021, the Presidio Trust Tree Crew cleared the overgrown Post Nursery area as part of the Wright Loop Reforestation project.

The Wright Loop Reforestation Project removed Acacia trees, a diseased Pine tree, ivy, and a large patch of overgrown Himalayan blackberry. In February 2022, Alex Roberts, manager, and the tree crew grubbed, graded, and planted the hillside as a heritage fruit orchard with 4-foot fruit tree saplings of: Black Limbertwig Apple, Cinnamon Spice Apple, White Pearmain Apple, Roxbury Russet Apple, Santa Rosa Plum, Peentau Peach, Cherry, and one Sugary Twist Pluerry (A. Roberts, personal communication, 2022). By planting a fruit orchard, the Presidio Trust memorializes the historic Post Nursery's original site, active from 1912. Michael Lamb, Historic Landscape Architect, and Lewis Stringer, Associate Director of Natural Resources, both at the Presidio Trust, plan to border the orchard with native plants and a seating area (M. Lamb, L. Stringer, personal communication, 2022).

The photographs below show the heritage fruit orchard in April 2022. At the boundary alongside the fruit orchard is a transition zone of native plants. Gardeners encourage native California blackberries to grow, while digging out Himalayan blackberry, poison hemlock, mattress weed, and invasive thistle. Gardeners are nurturing Western Sword ferns and flowering currant shrubs to grow along the boundary. The Presidio Trust installed a temporary irrigation system to water the fruit tree saplings and volunteers weed the newly planted orchard.



The photograph shows the setting of the new heritage fruit orchard on the cleared and graded hillside above the present-day Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden plots. View looking west and uphill from the community garden planting beds. Wisser Court is situated along the right side of the photo. Wright Loop roadway is along the top of the photo.



Closeup view showing the cleared orchard terrain with erosion control straw wattles, irrigation water piping, wood stakes, and wood chip mulch around the 3-foot fruit tree saplings. In the background is vehicle garage building 1325 built in 1942, that replaced the original Post Nursery buildings built circa 1912.



Heritage Fruit Orchard photographs taken in June 2023 show extensive native plant restoration as well as heritage fruit trees flourishing, increasing habitat for pollinators, birds, and other species. Ongoing stewardship work by staff and volunteers will ensure this new landscape will continue to evolve. Images: courtesy of Barbara Corff 2023.

During the winter 2023, the Presidio Trust's Lewis Stringer, Associate Director of Natural Resources, started the native plant transition zones along the west, north, and east sides of the new heritage fruit orchard. Michael Lamb, Historic Landscape Architect for the Presidio Trust, and Barbara Corff worked out the conceptual plan for the transition zone planting to create buffer zones to replace bird habitat lost during the orchard construction. On January 7th and February 11th, planting occurred at the north boundary along Wisser Court. The area planted had been prepared by weeding during earlier volunteer workdays. This Saturday, volunteer gardeners / residents worked with Alvin Wu, team manager for the Presidio Habitat Stewards. The Habitat Stewards describe its mission as follows:

Habitat Stewards help restore and preserve the natural areas of the Presidio of San Francisco. Habitat restoration is a proactive, hands-on way to revitalize damaged ecosystems and promote environmental health! Learn about the plants and animals found in our local creeks, dunes, grasslands, woodlands, and other natural landscapes. Activities often include planting, watering, weeding, or spreading mulch.

Garden volunteers on January 7th included Stan Vonog, Anne Kasmar, Emily Field, Barbara Corff, and Mark Youngkin. The team planted almost 230 native plants in a planting plan laid out by team leader Alvin Wu. The team planted a palette of native plant species to be nourished by the winter rains.

Habitat Stewards team leader Alvin Wu and volunteer gardeners and residents Anne Kasmar, Emily Field, Stan Vonog, Barbara Corff, and Mark Youngkin planting native plants in the northern fruit orchard transition zone along Wisser Court.



Gardener's Shed Restoration

In 1996, the San Francisco Waldorf School in nearby Pacific Heights began using the new community garden for an urban gardening class and the school donated materials for a tool shed. In 1997, volunteer gardeners and Waldorf School families built the Gardener's Shed as the first building in the community garden.

The Gardener's Shed was the only building in the Garden from 1997 through 2018. In 2018 and 2019, the Presidio Trust built three new buildings for its educational, outreach, and intern programs in the Garden.

In 2019, Presidio Trust staff removed the cedar shake shingles from the Gardener's Shed roof. It planned to replace the shed with a large pavilion and did not replace the roof covering. The shed floor suffered rainwater damage during the winter of 2019-2020. The Covid-19 pandemic began in January 2020, and the Presidio Trust suspended all Garden programs in May 2020. No budget or staff remained at the Garden to build a new pavilion or install a new roof covering on the forlorn Gardener's Shed. A second season of winter rain soaked the unprotected tool shed. Fallen leaves a foot deep from the overhanging Sycamore-London Planetree covered the sodden floor. Windblown leaves filled the crawl space beneath the damaged interior-grade plywood subfloor. By the end of the second winter season, a gaping hole developed in the shed floor discouraging entry into the now abandoned tool shed. From October 20 to 24, 2021, an atmospheric river and storm poured seven inches of rainwater on the garden drenching the unprotected shed floor again for the third winter in a row.

Instead of watching the once useful community tool shed decay, garden volunteers Barbara Corff and Mark Youngkin resolved to rescue the tool shed and the Gardener's Shed restoration project began suddenly. In late October 2021, using staples and rope, gardeners fitted an unused blue plastic tarp over the shed roof. Mark shoveled out the sodden mass of wet leaves from the shed's interior to expose the damaged floor. He raked out the wind-blown leaves from under the shed—so the ocean breeze could dry out the shed floor from underneath. After two weeks of warm Autumn sun, the shed floor was dry and ready for repair. An overgrown, forgotten pile of 2 by 6-inch recycled plastic lumber had enough planks to cover the shed floor. Mark cut the plastic lumber to fit on top of the damaged plywood subfloor and screwed the new floor planks to the cedar joists. With a car jack, he raised a sunken corner of the shed, reset a collapsed foundation pad, then leveled the shed floor. Mark used left-over plastic lumber to build a new front porch and a sturdy workbench.

During the spring and summer of 2022, Mark repaired holes in the cedar siding and gave the shed a coat of Thompson's water seal. The roof had rotted purlins that he replaced along the roof eaves. He braced the roof with interior beams and cross bracing to make a sturdy ceiling truss. He screwed the roof frame tightly together and to the perimeter walls.

In September 2022, Barbara Corff and Mark Youngkin donated a new roof covering to complete the restoration of the Gardener's Shed. On top of the existing cedar purlins, Mark added a 7/16-inch OSB sheathing deck covered with 30-pound roofing felt. Galvanized metal drip edge and Owens Corning Oakridge Driftwood laminated roof shingles finished the new roof. He sealed all openings under the eaves and rakes with lumber blocking. Barbara added fuchsia to the new flower boxes. We hope the restored Gardener's Shed will serve the community garden for decades to come.



Photograph from September 2022 showing finished restoration of 1997 Gardener's Shed by community gardeners Mark Youngkin and Barbara Corff.



Photograph from June 2023 with fellow gardeners at an early evening get-together. We enjoyed watercolor painting of garden flowers, tasted delicious food, and shared our love of the garden. We were proud to celebrate the publication of this document and our long involvement with the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden.



Great Horned Owls perch on a Dawn Redwood tree branch in summer fog at Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden. Photo credit: photographer – Charity Vargas, Presidio of San Francisco official twitter site @presidiosf

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Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden

Presidio of San Francisco, California

ATTACHMENTS

Chronicle of Historical Events

List of Early Gardeners

Chronicle of Historical Events

Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden, Presidio of San Francisco, California

Date	Name	Historical Event
1866	Presidio Forest	U.S. Army begins planting Presidio Forest on drifting sand dunes
1910	Kobbe Officers Quarters	Construction begins on Kobbe Officers Quarters
1912	Fort Winfield Scott	Fort Winfield Scott opens as new Coast Artillery division command post and Colonel John P. Wisser assigned as commanding officer
1912	Ft Scott Post Nursery	Summer 1912, Colonel Wisser promotes building Post Nursery to supply plants to vegetate batteries and beautify the post for PPIE
1912	Golden Gate	Golden Gate strait planted with golden flowers by Outdoor Arts League of California as part of city beautification movement
1912	Ft Scott Post Nursery	Army clears Presidio Forest to build new Post Nursery
1915	Post Green House	New Post Green House supplies plants and flowers to beautify the post for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE)
1918	Post Green House	Expansion of Post Nursery with planting beds surrounding the new Post Green House
1927	Coast Redwood Trees	Army plants 3 coast redwoods and names Wisser Court in honor of Brig. Gen. John P. Wisser
1938	Post Green House Ft Scott Post Nursery	Army-WPA-CCC improvements enlarge Post Green House and add new cobblestone wall and access ramp at the northern greenhouse entrance to reach planting beds on upper terrace
1933- 1938	WPA-CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) training and supply facility between 1933 and 1939, Post Nursery expands during the Great Depression of 1929 to late 1930s. The U.S. Works Projects Administration (WPA) active in Fort Winfield Scott
1939	Parterre Rose Garden	Army-WPA-CCC builds formal parterre rose garden to beautiful post for 1939-1940 Golden Gate International Exposition (World's Fair) to celebrate the completion of the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco Bay Bridge, victory garden planting beds expanded along the western boundary at Wright Loop
1941- 1942	Ft Scott Post Nursery	Army demolishes obsolete 1912 Post Nursery buildings for building of two 5-car auto garages, during World War II the victory garden planting beds expand into parterre rose garden
1946	Fort Winfield Scott	Fort Winfield Scott decommissioned to sub-post of Presidio post
1950	Fort Winfield Scott	U.S. Army closes Coast Artillery division and school
1954	Dawn Redwood Tree	Army-DAR plant dawn redwood tree at Pershing Square
1956	Fort Scott Post Nursery	Army replaces perimeter security fence around Post Nursery
1956	Fort Scott Post Nursery	The Star Presidian newspaper discusses DAR dawn redwood tree at Pershing Square
1959	Post Green House	Army builds new fiberglass greenhouse at Post Nursery
1964	Vietnam War	U.S. Army sends troops to Vietnam
1969	Ft Scott Post Nursery	Post Nursery untended by 1969 aerial photograph, formal parterre rose garden may remain active for officer's families
1972	GGNRA	Presidio of San Francisco named as a future new unit of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area upon base closure
1980	Post Commissary	Army builds large new commissary building at Crissy Field

Chronicle of Historical Events at Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden continued...

Date	Name	Historical Event
1985	Post Green House	Army inventories vacant Post Green House as obsolete
1986	Post Green House	Army demolishes vacant Post Green House and outbuildings
1987	U.S. Army storage yard	1987 aerial photograph shows vacant, overgrown, and untended Post Nursery used as a temporary storage yard
1988	Habitat Restoration Team	Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy sets up the Habitat Restoration Team with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area
1990	Post to Park	Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy begins work with National Park Service on conversion of Presidio to new national park
1992	Kobbe Community Garden	NPS writes Cultural Landscape Analysis and Historic Landscape Architects discover overgrown community garden
1993	Presidio of San Francisco	Park Service planning for transition to national park by writing environmental impact statement and management plan
1993	Site Stewardship Program	Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy launches Site Stewardship Program now called Park Stewardship
1994	Kobbe Community Garden	NPS General Management Plan Amendment preserves gardens
1994	Restoration Projects	Park Service and Golden Gate Parks Association start Park Stewards program and Native Plant Nursery then begin first major habitat restoration project at Lobos Creek Valley
1994	Army transfers Presidio	On October 1, 1994, the U.S. Army transfers the Presidio of San Francisco to the National Park Service and leaves in 1995
1995	Composting Program	Native Plant Nursery starts Presidio Composting Program
1995	Presidio Alliance for Sustainability	Nonprofit Presidio Alliance for Sustainability forms board of directors and hires Executive Director
1996	World War II Victory Garden	Marcia Smith-White, board member of Presidio Alliance for Sustainability and Neighborhood Mayor starts Victory Garden rehabilitation with help from Bob Chandler, General Manager
1997	Fort Scott Organic Community Garden (FSOCG)	Marcia Smith-White invites her contacts to be new gardeners; volunteers and park staff install water line, clear area for plots
1997	FSOCG	San Francisco Waldorf School builds Gardener's Shed
1998	FSOCG	Presidio Trust assumes management of Presidio and Garden
1999	FSOCG	Presidio Trust starts regeneration / composting programs
2001	Mushroom Garden	Mycological Society of San Francisco builds mushroom garden/lab
2002	Presidio Community Garden	Presidio Trust Management Plan conserves overgrown gardens
2005	Mushroom Garden	Mycological Society removes mushroom garden / laboratory
2008	Presidio Community Garden	Cultural Landscape Assessment conserves community garden
2010	FSOCG	New raised planting beds & new neighborhood gardens
2011	Presidio Habitats	Presidio Habitats Exhibit no. 8 installed in garden as wildlife hotspot
2018	FSOCG	New workshop-office and greenhouse built in 2018
2019	FSOCG	New tool shed built in 2019
2020	FSOCG	Covid-19 pandemic lockdown causes pause of garden programs
2022	Gardener's Shed	Community volunteer restoration project with new roof and floor
2023	Heritage Fruit Orchard	Wright Loop Reforestation project of 1912 Post Nursery site

List of Early Gardeners

Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden Presidio of San Francisco, California

The list includes park staff, Presidio residents, and community volunteers that made the Fort Winfield Scott Organic Community Garden a community of gardeners.

Anne Marie
Andrew Taylor
Anita Vermeulen
Brian Hildebidle
Barbara Corff 2000-present
Charity Maybury 2000
Cristina & Steven Prokop 1998
Chuck Beadie 1997
Damien Raffa 1997
Doug Kern 2000
Jan Blum 1998
Jean Koch 1997-2020
Jeanette Park
Joanne Winship 1997-present
Katy Pleak
Ken Litchfield 2001-2005
Lisa Hillstrom
Marcia Smith-White 1996
Mark Youngkin 2000-present
Michael Chasse 2005
Mycological Society of San Francisco 2001-2005
Natalie Smith
Roberta Morgenstern 2008
Sam Clinton
Tania Pollak 2000
Terri Thomas
Tracy Wright 2000
San Francisco Waldorf School families 1997